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## VA DAV HANDBOOK

Ralph H. Johnson Medical Center  
Charleston, SC

Voluntary Service

Department of Veterans Affairs  
Revised 11/2017

### **RALPH H. JOHNSON**



Ralph H. Johnson was born January 11, 1949, in Charleston, South Carolina. He enlisted in the U.S. Marine Corps Reserve at Oakland, California, March 23, 1967, and was discharged to enlist in the Regular Marine Corps, July 2, 1967.

In January 1968, he arrived in the Republic of Vietnam, and served as a Reconnaissance Scout with Company "A", 1<sup>st</sup> Reconnaissance Battalion 1<sup>st</sup> Marine Division (REIN), FMF. In early morning hours of March 5, 1968, during Operation ROCK, PFC Johnson was a member of a fifteen-man reconnaissance patrol manning an observation post on Hill 146 overlooking the Quan Duc Valley deep in enemy controlled territory.

They were attacked by a platoon-size hostile force employing automatic weapons, satchel charges and hand grenades. Suddenly, a hand grenade landed in the three-man fighting hole occupied by PFC Johnson and two fellow marines. Realizing the inherent danger to his two comrades, he shouted a warning and unhesitatingly hurled himself upon the explosive device. When the grenade exploded, PFC Johnson absorbed the tremendous impact of the blast and was killed instantly. His prompt and heroic act saved the life of one marine at the cost of his own and undoubtedly prevented the enemy from penetrating his sector of the patrol's perimeter.

In view of the above, PFC Johnson was awarded the Medal of Honor posthumously.

Other medals and decorations included: the Purple Heart, the National Defense Service Medal, the Vietnam Service Medal with two bronze stars, the Vietnamese Cross of Gallantry with Palm, the Vietnamese Military Merit Medal, the Combat Action Ribbon, and the Navy Unit Commendation Medal, Civil Actions First Class and Good Conduct Marine Corps.

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# Welcome to the Ralph H. Johnson VAMC Voluntary Service

This booklet is designed to assist the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) volunteer driver in carrying out assigned duties more effectively. This booklet provides you with an overview of your role and responsibilities as a volunteer driver with the Ralph H. Johnson VA Medical Center.

VA volunteers are valuable members of the medical center team, functioning under the direct supervision of a staff member. Volunteers do not replace paid personnel, but will perform many useful services that are beyond the scope of the regular staff.

For whatever reason an individual decides to volunteer at the VA medical center - whether for school credits, community service, practical work experience, or a sense of patriotism and respect of this nation's Veterans - the rewards for such service are endless. Volunteers are our greatest patient advocates, providing program support and a wealth of new and innovative ideas.

As a VA volunteer, you will have the opportunity to provide necessary and worthwhile assistance to the patients and staff. You can also gain valuable experience, a deeper consciousness of the responsibility of helping others and the satisfaction such service brings.

The information included on the following pages is designed to assist you in becoming familiar with the Ralph H. Johnson VA Medical Center, Voluntary Service and your assignment.

Thank you for your service.

*Fred Lesinski*

Chief, Voluntary Service

Ralph H. Johnson VA Medical Center 843-789-7230, email  
VHACHAVAVS@va.gov

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## YOU AS A VA VOLUNTEER

The following section is designed to provide you with the basic information you will need to begin (or continue) your volunteer assignment. Please take time to read each item. Should you have any questions, please feel free to contact the Volunteer Transportation Coordinator or any Voluntary Service staff member. We are here to assist you in your assignment so that you may achieve the best results in helping America's Veterans.

### ROLE

As a regular-scheduled (RS) volunteer, you are a member of the VA medical center team and have an invaluable role in its mission. Individuals who volunteer their time and efforts through the VAVS program are supplemental to the essential VA personnel at the medical center. Specifically, VA policy states that volunteers in the VA medical center programs are assigned for the purpose of supplementing, not replacing, the VA staff for augmenting program activities in accordance with the needs identified at each medical center.

### AUTHORIZATION

Volunteers who agree to serve on an approved RS assignment will be officially authorized to serve on a "without compensation" basis. To be an RS volunteer, the official VAVS representative of your organization and/or the Chief, Voluntary Service must certify you.

NOTE: Many of our volunteers are not affiliated with VAVS service organizations. Many volunteers are recruited through other community resources such as local schools and churches, and the Retired Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP).

### ORIENTATION

The brief orientation presentation is designed to familiarize you generally with the VA medical center, Voluntary Service and your role as a volunteer. This orientation includes general information about several volunteer responsibilities and benefits. Specific assignment orientation varies in length and is under the direction of the respective medical center supervisor who will inform you of matters pertaining to your assignment area. Specific instructions about the various safety issues, like fire and infection control procedures, will be discussed during orientation.

### ASSIGNMENTS

The Voluntary Service staff is responsible for making all volunteer assignments commensurate with the current medical center needs and the qualifications of the individual volunteer.

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Volunteer abilities, skills, interests and career goals are taken into consideration when volunteer assignments are made.

If, after a fair trial, (usually a 30-day period) and adequate on-the-job-training, you find you are unhappy with the assignment, please discuss the matter with Voluntary Service staff. If possible, an appropriate assignment will be found for you in another area.

### **GIFTS and DONATIONS**

The Chief, Voluntary Service or designee is responsible for coordinating the acceptance and acknowledgment of all gifts and donations offered to the medical center. These gifts and donations will be used for the sole purpose of meeting particular needs and requirements for the welfare and comfort of the patients. Some of the more popular donated items include magazine subscriptions for the patient library, quilted items such as lap robes, blankets, etc. Additionally, donated funds fully support the patient welfare program and several other services and activities that enhance and expand federally supported healthcare services.

All equipment items donated to the medical center become the property of the United States Government.

Officials and employees of the Department of Veterans Affairs will not solicit gifts or donations or authorize the name of the VA to be used by individuals or organizations or the authorize name of anyone in the VA to be used for this purpose. This does not preclude discussion of appropriateness with an individual offering a gift.

A complete list of routine material donation needs and monetary donation accounts is available upon request from the Voluntary Service Office.

The DAV Transportation Network is designed to provide transportation services to Veterans in need of medical care facilities and who have no other means of transportation.

DAV transportation drivers are volunteers who drive a government vehicle, originally donated by the Disabled American Veterans Service Organization, to be used to transport Veterans.

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RALPH H. JOHNSON DEPARTMENT OF  
VETERANS AFFAIRS MEDICAL CENTER  
CHARLESTON, SC

CENTER POLICY MEMORANDUM  
135-14-04  
October 15, 2014

## VOLUNTEER TRANSPORTATION NETWORK PROGRAM

I. PURPOSE. To define policy, responsibility and procedures governing the operation of the Volunteer Transportation Network (VTN) Program.

### II. POLICY.

A. Current Department of Veterans Affairs guidelines permit volunteers to participate in providing transportation to meet the needs for supplemental transportation for Veteran patients to and from medical appointments that have no other means of transportation.

B. The VTN may use government-owned vehicles, including VTS and Rural Health vans, donated vehicles, and county vehicles. Volunteers may drive Veteran Transportation Service (VTS) vehicles when VTN vehicles are not an option for Veterans requiring transportation, provided they have a separate volunteer position description for the VTS assignment, and if they have met all of the requirements to be a volunteer driver outlined in this policy, including any additional training to use special equipment such as wheelchair lifts, and securing and transporting wheelchairs.

C. When the transportation network program is not using the VTN vehicle, it may be used to support other medical center activities.

D. The DAV Hospital Service Coordinator (HSC) will coordinate the VTN and utilize volunteers who have met the necessary requirements established by the Volunteer Office guidelines in order to best meet the needs of the Veterans.

E. Volunteer drivers must sign in on the VTN sign in log and be on an official assignment to assure coverage by the Federal Tort Claims Act.

F. Transportation of non-beneficiaries is only authorized in those instances where it is medically indicated for the Veteran patient to be accompanied or escorted during transport.

### III. DELEGATION OF AUTHORITY AND RESPONSIBILITIES.

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### **A. Voluntary Service Program Manager is responsible for:**

1. Supervising the HSC in cooperation with the DAV.
2. Ensuring appropriate qualifications, orientation and training of volunteers, and maintaining compliance with driver requirements, including physical exams, driving record reviews, proof of insurance, driver training certificates, and driver's license renewals on expiration.
3. Ensuring volunteer drivers who operate VTS vehicles are properly trained on wheelchair lift, security procedures and assigned a separate assignment code for use when operating VTS vehicles for the VTS program.

B. A DAV employee designated as Hospital Service Coordinator (HSC) will have primary responsibility for the overall operation and coordination of the VTN Program.

C. Engineering Service will have the overall responsibility for maintaining the VTN vehicles.

### **IV. ACTION.**

A. Voluntary Service Program Manager will coordinate, with the DAV HSC, the recruitment of volunteers in the VTN, maintain accurate and up to date records for volunteer drivers, track volunteer requirements as outlined in this paragraph to ensure compliance, and re-assign or terminate volunteer drivers not in compliance with program requirements. Volunteer drivers will meet the following criteria as documented in the Voluntary Service Office:

1. Possess a valid state driver's license, provide proof of insurance and provide driver's license history. Any applicants having been cited, within the last three years, for any of the following traffic violations/offenses, will not be accepted into the medical center's Volunteer Program as a driver.
  - a. DUI/DWI
  - b. Careless Driving
  - c. Reckless Driving
  - d. Suspended/Revoked License
  - e. Refusal to submit to test for alcohol
  - f. More than one speeding offense (1-15 mph over posted speed limit)
  - g. Speeding 16 mph or more above posted speed limit

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*The Volunteer Program Manager, and the Chief, VA Police Service will review all other traffic offenses/violations. Driving record will be reviewed every two years.*

2. Receive a favorable result on the physical examination from the VA Employee Health physician. Re-examination is due on recommendation of Employee Health physician or IAW interval recommended in VHA Directive 5019.

3. Complete a general volunteer orientation through the Voluntary Service Office.

4. Receive VA TMS motor vehicle safety training, government fleet card training, and van operations training from Voluntary Service. These training courses are an annual requirement.

5. Ensure that up to date documentation on above items is provided to Voluntary Service.

6. Meet all other requirements of regularly scheduled volunteers as documented in CPM 135-01 "Utilization and Recruitment of Volunteers".

7. Volunteer drivers who operate VTS vehicles will complete training for those vehicles, including wheelchair lift and security, to be documented in the volunteer folder.

8. When using VTS vehicles for use in the VTN or under VTS supervision, sign in as VTN drivers.

B. DAV Hospital Service Coordinator will:

1. Coordinate all requests for transportation from VA staff and Veteran patients.

2. Ensure the VTN office and phone are covered during normal duty hours to assure all requests may be received and responded to in a timely manner.

3. Make every attempt to make the necessary transportation arrangements. If unable to complete travel arrangements, advise community-based Veterans who require transportation to contact local groups or refer to other community resources that might possibly be available.

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4. Maintain accurate records of all patients transported and of the VTN. These records should include:

- a. Names of volunteer drivers.
- b. Individual volunteer hours.
- c. Record of mileage traveled.
- d. Name, last four of social security number, date, time, and place of pickup and delivery of patient.

5. Coordinate the VTN with the Voluntary Service Program Manager or designee to assure that he/she officially recognizes all volunteer drivers and their hours as official hours. All volunteer monthly time records are to be submitted to the Volunteer Office no later than the third working day of the following month in which they are earned, if applicable.

6. Notify Beneficiary Travel Clerk of every Veteran who utilizes the VTN as a mode of transportation to and from this VAMC. These Veterans will not be eligible for beneficiary travel reimbursement from medical center funds.

7. Keep the Voluntary Service Program Manager informed concerning all aspects of the VTN.

8. Ensure cleanliness of vehicle for transporting Veteran patients.

9. Coordinate repairs with Engineering Service and obtain approval in advance for repairs in excess of \$100.

10. Collect and provide to Engineering Service all vehicle logs, fuel and repair receipts, and accident reports by the 5<sup>th</sup> of each month.

C. Engineering Service, will be responsible for:

1. Maintenance and repair of the VTN vehicles and scheduling its use for other approved medical center activities.

2. Designating a parking space for the vehicle when not in use.

D. VTS program manager is responsible for requesting and utilizing trained VTS volunteer drivers as needed from the Voluntary Service Program Manager and HSC. Drivers assigned to VTS will be on an as-available basis if such assignment does interrupt VTN operations.

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V. REFERENCE.

- A. VHA Handbook 1620.1
- B. VHA Handbook 1620.2
- C. VHA Directive 5019

VI. RESCISSION. Center Policy Memorandum No. 135-12-04 "Volunteer Transportation Network Program", dated June 19, 2012.

SCOTT R. ISAACKS, FACHE  
Director

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# Requirements and Processing New DAV Drivers



- Fill out volunteer application, PIV form, driver information form, copy of insurance card, driver license and 2<sup>nd</sup> photo ID, and DMV driving record for past 3 years. Turn in to DAV Hospital Service Coordinator (HSC).
- History and Physical, PPD test, and hearing exam scheduled by the Hospital Service Coordinator (HSC).
- Applicant comes to VAMC for orientation, physical, and fingerprints. This is driver training trip #1.
- Once you pass the physical, Voluntary Service notifies HSC.
- PIV and badge process – once cleared then...
- Voluntary Service schedules orientation (driver training trip #2) ○ Driver Rules
  - Inappropriate use of vehicle, behavior and communication ○ Telephone availability ○ Passenger rules ○ Issue Shirt ○ Position Description
  - Risk and Sensitivity Level Designation

### **Meet with HSC at end of orientation to review:**

- Review of Disabled American Veterans (DAV) Leadership Role
- Eligibility of Veterans needing transportation
- Unique needs of local facility
- Hours
- Local parking regulations and locations
- Check list for van inspection and maintained
- Appropriate use of vehicle
- Key to van
- Schedule
- Set up training with current driver to show new driver route and expectations.

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### **RALPH H. JOHNSON VA MEDICAL CENTER TRANSPORTATION RULES FOR DAV VAN DRIVERS**

- **Contact each Veteran** on their list for transportation, the day before transportation to advise them of the time for pick up the next day.
- **Arrive at origin at least 15 minutes** before departure to: Start engine, inspect van and prepare log sheet
- **Greet each passenger** and confirm that he/she is the Veteran for transportation that corresponds with the list provided by the HSC. Drivers should check all passengers picture ID's for identification of those not known.
- **9 passenger vans** hold only 8 passengers and a driver.
- Advise first time riders of the "**Transportation Rules for Passengers**", see page 12.
- All portable oxygen tanks **must** be secured with the installed holder inside of the vehicle. Passengers with portable oxygen packs or bags are allowed secure them in their lap for the duration of the trip.
- **Instruct all passengers** to check in at the DAV office in the Welcome Center after their appointment is completed.
- **Expedite sheets** are available to the van riders to assist them in expediting their appointments.
- Drivers are to ensure each passenger is **wearing a seatbelt**.
- Please **advise the HSC** whenever you are away from the hospital
- Drivers should **sign in/out on the drivers log** at the front desk and on the Volunteer Computer in the Voluntary Office and report as soon as possible to the Hospital Service Coordinator's (HSC) office for instructions on the coordination of patient appointments throughout the day.
- If a **call needs to be made**, the volunteer should stop the vehicle in a safe area and make the telephone call. Portable hands-free accessories are NOT acceptable. Other occupants may use wireless telephones while the vehicle is in motion.
- **In case of emergency**, stop the vehicle, call 911, and stay with the vehicle until help arrives.
- **Drivers may assist the patients** in and out of the vans, but **are not** to lift patients or attend medically to them.
- VTN drivers will **not leave passengers unattended** or the vehicle unsecured and Drivers should make sure the **gas tanks** are full at the end of the day.
- **Gas receipts** for VTN Vans will be put in the envelope in the van. They will be picked up at the end of the month.
- **Mileage logs** will be completed every day and kept in the van until the end of the month.

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- Drivers will **NOT request or accept tips** from the passengers due to VA regulations.
- Drivers will make every effort to leave the VAMC no later than 3:00 pm unless notified of patient appointment delays. **Do Not Leave Patients** without prior HSC or Voluntary Service approval.
- Drivers **Will Not** go to clinic areas to check the status of a passenger's appointment. Check with the HSC or Voluntary Service only.
- Drivers need to **treat their passengers with courtesy and respect.**
- Drivers **Must Not** give out personal information about passengers.

### Disciplinary Action Procedures

If you fail to follow "Transportation Rules for VTN Drivers" you will be subject to the disciplinary actions listed below:

Any action of a volunteer that affects the safety and security of the Veterans will be terminated immediately.

For all other offenses

1. Verbal counseling
2. Written counseling
3. Suspension – 10 days
4. Termination

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### **RALPH H. JOHNSON VA MEDICAL CENTER TRANSPORTATION RULES FOR PASSENGERS**

1. Passengers should call the Van Transportation Coordinator to schedule a ride **three** working days in advance of their appointment and present their VA ID card to the Van Driver in order to ride the van. (If you do not schedule your ride on the Van, you may be told there is not room on the van).
2. Passengers must wear their “Van Rider” badges visibly on the outside garment at all times during their medical visit at the VAMC.
3. The back seat on the 15 passenger vans **CAN NOT** be used for safety reasons.
4. The 9 passenger vans hold only 8 passengers and a driver.
5. Passengers will wear seatbelts at all times while riding in the van.
6. Passengers should report directly to their clinic appointments upon arrival at the VAMC. Patients should present their (pink) expedite sheets to the clinic personal making sure that the name and social security number on the sheet is correct. The bottom part of the expedite sheet is for the pharmacy, so please tear apart.
7. Passengers are to ride the van only if they have a scheduled appointment at the Charleston VAMC. Also, if your appointment is canceled for any reason, **you must notify the DAV coordinator and cancel your Van reservation**. The phone number to call is (843) 789-7307. The van CAN NOT schedule a passenger to come to the Emergency Room.
8. It is the responsibility of the passenger to give the coordinator information about all of his appointment times and places. We cannot except appointments later than 1:30 pm or earlier than 9:00 am.
9. Once appointments are completed, the passenger will report to the DAV Driver in the Welcome Center for further instructions.
10. Vans will make every effort to leave the VAMC by 3:00 p.m. If for some reason, you cannot meet the 3:00 p.m. departure, please try to notify your van driver as soon as possible.
11. If you fail to follow the above rules, you must have the necessary funds to provide your own transportation and/or expenses. You will not hold the DAV or the VAMC responsible.
12. Passengers **should not leave the hospital grounds** unless they have a VA scheduled appointment by an off-campus physician.
13. Passengers must treat the driver and their fellow Veteran passengers with courtesy and respect. The Volunteer Driver will keep a log of all Veterans riding the van. and will report any disrespectful actions.

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14. The van driver is only permitted to stop the van for rest stops and/or emergencies and to pick up and discharge passengers. Passengers should not request the driver to make side trips to take care of their personal business.
15. Passengers are not permitted to smoke, chew tobacco, drink alcohol, use foul language or bring weapons, drugs or any illegal substance on the van. The van driver will not provide transportation to any Veteran who is intoxicated, abusive or poses a threat to the driver or other passengers on the van. Food or beverages are permitted on the vans; however, you must clean up after yourself.
16. If a patient will be staying for a 28-day treatment, they may have one large suitcase.
17. If there is a change in your appointment and you will not be riding the van, please cancel your ride. If you do not show for your ride, after the 3<sup>rd</sup> no show, you will not be permitted to schedule a ride on the van, it will be space available only.
18. Failure to comply with these rules will result in termination of your privileges.
19. In case of an emergency, please call 911.

*We want your volunteer experience at this VA Medical Center to be a positive, rewarding and fulfilling one. You are a valuable part of our effort to provide quality care to our veteran patients.*

*Thank you for the service you provide for the Veterans who come to the VA Medical Center for care. You are appreciated by Veterans and staff alike.*

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## Liability



Transporting Veterans who are seeking a variety of services and benefits to and or from a VA facility or other approved health care provider is an authorized VAVS (Veterans Affairs Voluntary Service) volunteer assignment.

Volunteer drivers are protected by the Federal Tort Claims Act (FTCA) while they are engaged in the performance of their specific assignment. Deviation from the duties of the assignment could exclude individuals from coverage by FTCA. It is necessary that transportation volunteers do not make side trips while in the performance of their assignment and take the most direct route to and from the VA facility.

Your liability coverage begins when you start the van at the beginning of your trip and ends after all Veterans have been taken to their drop off points and the van has been parked at the end of the trip.

Federal law provides protection to all VA volunteers from claims or suits for personal injuries or death or for property damage so long as the volunteers' actions are part of their Federal duties.

- A. The transportation must be related to an approved VA function and must be considered official VA business.
- B. The volunteer must adhere to practices promoting good vehicle maintenance and safety.
- C. Volunteers may not charge for their services nor receive compensation or payment for the services they provide. In addition, volunteer drivers must:
  - Complete a volunteer application.
  - Receive volunteer specific and driver specific orientation by Voluntary Service and/or the DAV Hospital Services Coordinator.
  - Sign a waiver of compensation.
  - Provide proof of vehicle liability insurance and have a current driver's license.
  - Pass a physical examination performed by VA staff.
  - Future physical examinations will be scheduled as needed.
  - Complete a Motor Vehicle Safety Training by VA staff.

**If you leave the VA grounds in the DAV van to run errands or do personal shopping, your liability coverage will cease while you are on these side trips. Therefore, once you arrive, park the van until you are ready for the return trip home or have been instructed to do otherwise.**

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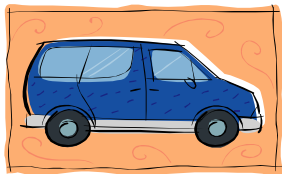
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### Use of Government Owned Vehicles



Only certified volunteer drivers operating under the direction of the DAV Hospital Services Coordinator will operate the vehicles. A certified driver is one who is a registered volunteer with Voluntary Service, has received orientation, and who holds a valid state driver's license and vehicle insurance, and who has passed a physical examination and motor vehicle safety training by this medical center.

Off-Stationed vans will be stationed at agreed upon secure locations (preferably a local government facility such as a court house). They will be used exclusively to transport patients for scheduled medical center appointments and treatments. Any exceptions to this rule will be rare and must be directed to Voluntary Service for approval. Vans will not be parked at the driver's personal residence, or any other area unless a written agreement is on file with Voluntary Service.

When transporting Veterans, the DAV van driver is only permitted to stop the van for rest stops and/or emergencies, or to pick up and discharge passengers at designated pick-up points. **NO SIDE TRIPS OR PERSONAL ERRANDS ARE PERMITTED.**

The DAV van is not an emergency vehicle. Should the Veteran require immediate emergency transportation, it is recommended that he or she dial 911.

**NOTE:** Transportation in the DAV van is offered free of charge to eligible veterans. The volunteer driver is **NOT** to accept payment and/or tips from any passenger for transportation in the van.

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### Operation Rules And Procedures



Drivers must obtain prior authorization for all trips from the DAV Hospital Services Coordinator or Chief Voluntary Service. Drivers must take the most direct route to and from the VA while transporting Veterans in order to be considered an “Employee of the Government” for insurance purposes.

Each trip is recorded on the Motor Vehicle Trip Log located in the van. Completed log sheets will be given to the DAV Hospital Services Coordinator.

### Smoking Policy

Cigarette smoking is **STRICTLY PROHIBITED** in all government owned vehicles as well as in all of the buildings of the VA medical center.

This regulation applies to employees, volunteers, patients and visitors. Individuals may smoke **ONLY** in the designated outside smoking areas.

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Each of the government owned vans comes equipped with supplies that may be needed in case of an emergency.

### **DAV Van Emergency items in each van include:**

<b>Emergency Items</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Blank Accident Report Forms</li><li>• Government Credit Card for fuel purchases</li><li>• Inflated/inflatable spare tire and working jack</li><li>• Emergency Folder with all forms</li><li>• First Aid kit</li></ul> <p>If these items are not in the van, or need replacement, contact Voluntary Service personnel. <u>All equipment and loose items will be properly secured or fastened down in the vehicle at all times.</u></p>
<b>Upon Arrival at the VA Medical Center</b>	<p>You are a representative of this medical center. Please wear your name badge, and be sure your appearance is neat and clean. The badge can be replaced if worn or lost. Be punctual and dependable.</p> <p>At the last pick up point, drivers are to call HSC at (843)789-7307 and report patients being transported. HSC will notify appropriate clinic staff with an e-mail. Veterans can be unloaded at the north entrance to the medical center and the vehicle can be parked in a designated parking spot.</p> <p>Ensure riders understand arrangements regarding the time and place to meet them for the return trip.</p> <p>Drivers will register their time with the DAV office and complete the driver sign in sheet. Report to the DAV Hospital Services Coordinator for any updated information. If you arrive home later than the time you recorded, you can adjust your time on your next visit to the medical center.</p> <p>Just make a separate driver entry on the sign in sheet with the previous date and additional hours we need to record.</p> <p>Report to the medical center Travel Clerk located in the Welcome Center. Provide the clerk with the names of the veterans you transported. These veterans will not be eligible for travel reimbursement. You may also be advised if there is an additional passenger for your return trip.</p>

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### While at the VA Medical Center



All drivers who are at the medical center are eligible for either a breakfast or lunch in the VA Cafeteria.

During your day at the medical center while the veterans are going through their clinic appointments, there are a number of ways you can spend your time at the medical center:

- A. Patients are your first priority.
- B. Shop in the VA Canteen Store or have something to eat.

Be sure your passengers are able to get to their scheduled appointments.

### Instructions For Completing The Motor Vehicle Trip



### Log

The Motor Vehicle Trip Log must be kept for each day the van is in use. This log enables the DAV Hospital Services Coordinator to keep accurate records of DAV driver activities. Additionally, Engineering Service utilizes the information posted on the form to record mileage, fuel costs, and repairs for each DAV van.

All DAV van drivers must complete the required information on this form each time they drive the van. Items requested on the form are as follows:

**Driver name**

Official Purpose: FM (from) City to VAMC; VAMC to City.

Number of Passengers: Number of passengers to the medical center and/or number returned to the pick-up points.

Time: Begin with time you picked up the van; conclude with time you returned to and parked the van at the end of your tour.

Day: Calendar day you are driving.

Hours & Minutes: Hours and minutes are figured from the time you picked up the van until the time you returned it.

Odometer Reading: **Out** is the mileage when you pick up the van; **In** is the mileage on the van when you park it at the conclusion of your trip.

Total Miles Driven on Trip: Subtract Miles Out from Miles In to get the total.

Cost and Care For: Record the cost of fuel and the number of gallons purchased. Minor repair costs may be written either on the next line or in the margin on the same line when the log is completed, it can be submitted to the DAV Hospital Services Coordinator.

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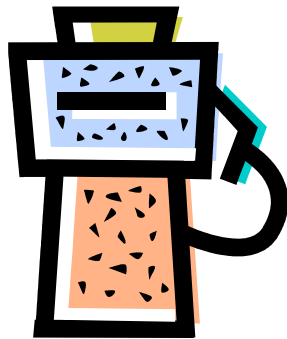
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### USING THE FLEET CARD



Not all service stations accept the government fleet credit card. Be sure to ask about their acceptance policy **BEFORE** pumping gas or having any other service done.

If the gas station has card readers located at the pump, you may use your Voyager card at the pump. If there are no pump card readers, see the attendant inside to process your transaction.

Swipe your card at the pump card reader. If the pump card reader will not accept the card, take the card inside to the attendant and have him/her attempt to process the transaction electronically on the inside equipment.

If the pump terminal requires you to choose either “Credit” or “Debit”, press the Credit key. If required, the terminal may prompt for an ID or PIN number. Enter the number at the bottom left-hand side of the card.

If the card cannot be read on any of the equipment, notify Voyager at the number shown on the back of your Voyager card. Voyager will notify the oil company of a problem at one of its locations. The company is often not aware that a problem exists.

If the sale is processed manually, write ID# and odometer reading on the ticket. If your card cannot be read electronically at any location, it is likely that the magnetic strip is damaged. If this occurs, notify your hospital coordinator to get a replacement card.

If the attendant at the gas station has any questions, provide him/her with the toll-free number on the back of the Voyager card for assistance in processing the transaction.

**Only regular grade fuel is allowed. Minor items such as windshield wipers, wiper fluid, and a car wash are allowed once per month.**

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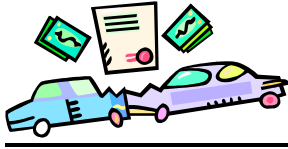
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### Reporting a Motor Vehicle Accident



If you are involved in an automobile accident, you must report the accident immediately to the highway patrol or city police by calling 911 and giving them your location. Check for injured personnel. At the earliest convenience, notify the DAV HSC at 843-789-7303, the Chief of Voluntary Service at 843-789-7488, and the VA Police at 843-7897251, to report the incident.

You must cooperate with law enforcement. You will be asked to provide the VA with a statement regarding the accident and you may be asked to complete necessary paperwork. Your driver's license must be current and you must have been driving within the scope of your assignments for federal coverage to be effective. Vehicle Registration and proof of government insurance is located in the vehicle.

The VA will obtain a copy of the highway patrol or police report shortly after the accident. Any citation received as a result of the accident or while operating the DAV van will be your responsibility.

Information regarding accident procedures is located in the van. Also included is an Accident Report form and witness statements. You will be asked to provide the VA with a statement about the accident and information on the other individual(s) involved. Following any accident, the driver will fill out a SF-91 Accident Report form and submit the form and pictures of the damage to the Fleet Vehicle Office.

The Federal Tort Claims Act (FTCA) applies to you (an approved VA volunteer) in the same manner it does to all employees of the VA. VA volunteers driving a VA vehicle (and that includes DAV vans) in the scope of government business (transporting Veterans to and from the VA for care) are covered under the Federal Tort Claims Act.

The FTCA protects you from being sued for an act or omission while "in the scope and course of your employment"—even if you are at fault. This means that if any claim/lawsuits are brought against you (for example: as a result of an accident), the VA will handle the case, including paying any damages.

If you are contacted concerning a claim against you, you should immediately contact the Regional Council's Office or Voluntary Service. In the event you are injured by your actions, the FTCA may not apply. There are other regulations that may deal with these actions. What you could recover will depend on the specific facts, but generally they are the same regulations that apply to all VA employees, whether for compensation or without.

Also, located in the van is a statement regarding proof of government insurance. Show the statement to the law enforcement officer. You do not need to provide personal proof of insurance cards while driving a government vehicle.

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### Questions & Answers

**Question:** Is there any protection for a DAV Department of Veterans Affairs Voluntary Service (VAVS) volunteer who is involved in an accident and has a claim filed against him or her?

**Answer:** *The Federal government will protect a VAVS volunteer against liability claims under a law known as Federal Tort Claims Act (FTCA), provided certain conditions have been met.*

**Question:** What conditions must be satisfied in order for a VAVS volunteer to be covered under the provisions of the FTCA?

**Answer:** *The volunteer must be a documented VAVS volunteer. The VA has determined that VAVS volunteers will be protected as Federal employees under the FTCA as long as they are performing a specific “VAVS approved assignment.” If a VAVS volunteer is not performing a specific “VAVS approved assignment,” but is on a non-VA mission or errand, coverage would not be available under FTCA.*

**Question:** What is a “VAVS approved assignment?”

**Answer:** *A “VAVS approved assignment” is a VA sanctioned, VAVS activity authorized by the Chief of VAVS or by the DAV HSC, who has a without compensation (WOC) appointment and has been delegated responsibility for this function by the VA.*

**Question:** When would a VAVS volunteer not be considered to be performing a “VAVS approved assignment” and, therefore, not protected by the FTCA?

**Answer:** *If it is determined that a VAVS volunteer was not engaged in official government business at the time of the accident, FTCA coverage will not be available to the VAVS volunteer.*

**Question:** What are some instances where a VAVS volunteer would not be protected under the FTCA for a negligent act because he was not acting within the scope of his “assignment?”

**Answer:** *If a VAVS volunteer deviates from the specific “VAVS approved assignment” of a transportation route to run an errand, makes a side trip to visit someone, engages in any activity primarily for personal profit, or is driving while impaired by drugs or alcohol, it is most unlikely that the FTCA would cover such negligent acts in these or similar situations (i.e. speeding, driving recklessly, etc.). The US Department of Justice makes the final determination.*

**Question:** Suppose the VAVS volunteer, while on a “VAVS approved assignment,” is asked by the Veteran to run an errand for the Veteran or a member of the Veteran’s family, such as buying groceries or going to the Post Office to pick up mail?

**Answer:** *If VAVS volunteers do not want to risk losing liability protection under the FTCA, they should decline to run errands not a part of their “VAVS approved assignment.”*

**Question:** In transporting a Veteran to and from a VA medical facility, which route should transportation VAVS volunteer use?

**Answer:** *The VAVS volunteer should take the most direct route, unless the transportation assignment directs otherwise.*

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**Question: How can VAVS volunteers ensure that the protections provided by the FTCA will be available to them?**

**Answer:** *By following their specific written "VAVS approved assignment" and by restricting their activities to carrying out that assignment.*

**Question: Should a VAVS volunteer continue to carry personal liability insurance to cover a situation where the VAVS volunteer might not be given the protection of the FTCA?** **Answer:** *Yes, it is always a good idea for VAVS volunteers to carry personal liability insurance to cover all of their personal driving needs, including time spent engaged in DAV transportation Network activities. This is especially so since the final decision as to whether the protection of FTCA applies is made by the Department of Justice and the courts. Volunteers should check with their insurance agent to be certain that adequate coverage will be provided by their individual insurance policies should the need arise.*

**Question: Is a VAVS volunteer entitled to compensation in the event of injury or death while on a "VAVS approved assignment?"**

**Answer:** *Under the Federal Employees Compensation Act (FECA), a VAVS volunteer is entitled to compensation and medical services for personal injury or death incident to the VAVS volunteer's assignment. However, the benefits of this Act are only available to VAVS volunteers who are determined to be on official government business as a VAVS volunteer.*

**Question: Is a VAVS volunteer entitled to compensation for damage to his privately-owned vehicle while on a "VAVS approved assignment?"**

**Answer:** *Under the Military Personnel and Civilian Employees Claims Act, a VAVS volunteer may file a claim up to \$40,000 for any property damage which was incident to the VAVS volunteer's service. However, no such claim will be paid if the VAVS volunteer was not on official government business when the accident occurred, or the VAVS volunteer was negligent, or was paid directly by another party for the property damage. The VA will only pay amounts not covered by an individual's private insurance. A claim under this Act must be filed within two years of the accident.*

**Question: What steps should be taken by a VAVS volunteer if involved in an accident while on a "VAVS approved assignment?"**

**Answer:** *The VAVS volunteer should assist any Veteran or other injured party in obtaining any necessary first aid or medical attention. Also, regardless of who may be at fault, the VAVS volunteer should promptly notify the DAV Hospital Service Coordinator and appropriate VA personnel of the accident, furnishing a written report (SF91) to them containing the full details and circumstances of the accident.*

**Question: What information or advice should a VAVS volunteer give to any of the parties involved in any such accident?**

**Answer:** *The VAVS volunteer should not give any information except that which may be required by state law. No legal advice, opinions or any other type of statement should be given. Otherwise, not only could the legal interests of the VAVS volunteer be seriously jeopardized, but also those of the VA and the DAV. The volunteer should, however, identify himself or herself as a VAVS volunteer.*

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### **VAN DAILY INSPECTION SHEET**

VAN: \_\_\_\_\_

Vehicle License Plate Number \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Conduct daily inspections of vehicle prior to setting out on your daily pick-up. This form will be turned in every Monday to HSC office. If there is a problem or concerns turn in immediately.

	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thurs	Fri	Ok	Defective	Note Concerns
Brakes								
Lights								
Seatbelts								
Wipers								
Windshield Fluid								
SF-91 (Accident Report)								
First Aid Kit (Complete)								
Vehicle Damage								
Tires								
Turn Signals								
Emergency Flasher								
Horn								
Leaks under Vehicle								
Telephone								
Other								

If there is mechanical problem with the Van on the way report ASAP

Person Conducting Inspection:

\_\_\_\_\_

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### **Important Phone Numbers**

- Emergency – 911
- VA Medical Center Police – (843)789-7251
- Administrative Officer of the Day – (843)577-5011
- DAV Transportation Network – (843)789-7307
- Voluntary Service – (843)789-7230

### **EMERGENCY ITEMS**

#### **Emergency items in each van include:**

- Blank Accident Report Forms
- A letter of Proof of Government Insurance
- Government Credit Card for fuel purchases
- Inflated/inflatable spare tire and working jack
- Emergency folder with all forms
- First Aid kit.

If these items are not in the van or need replacement, contact Voluntary Service personnel. **All equipment and loose items will be properly secured or fastened down in the vehicle at all times.**

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### **VTN Accident Procedures**

What to do IF you have an accident while driving with passengers

1. The first responsibility is to ensure that none of your passengers are injured. If so, look to their care first and call 911. Follow their instructions. They will call EMS and should anyone be injured, they must go to the nearest hospital.
  - i. When speaking to a 911 operator follow their instructions for care of the patient. We are volunteers, not trained to perform CPR.
  - ii. The 911 operator will notify the police.
2. If the driver is able, he/she will call the AOD on duty 843-789-7216. This person is on duty 24 hours a day and you will speak to a PERSON. Tell them what has happened and, if you know that any of the passengers are taken to a nearby hospital, please try to give the name of the patient and the name of the hospital. The VA will notify the family of that/those patient(s).
3. If the driver of the van is able and the van is drivable, please bring everyone to the VA emergency room. It is important to let AOD know who is on the van or not on the van (if they were transported by EMS). The AOD will notify the HSC, Emergency room and Volunteer Chief. HSC will have a list in hand and take to the Emergency room so they can be prepared when you and the other passengers arrive at the VA Hospital. Every passenger on the van must be seen at the Emergency room or sign a waiver if they do not wish to be checked out, this releases the VA of any problems that may come later.
4. Registration and Insurance – You will not have a registration or an insurance card in the van. Instead, you do have a letter signed by the VA Director stating this and you will present this to the police officer. The VTN Van is a government vehicle and is self-insured.
5. Accident Report Forms – There are accident report forms in this folder and should be filled out as soon as possible. The reports should include names of the passengers on the Van and there is also a form if you have a witness that needs to be completed.
6. Towing – If you need to be towed, call for a wrecker in whatever city you are in. Have it towed to the area that the HSC has advised. If you are in Charleston, you can call Palmetto Ford 843-571-3673 and use your credit card to pay for the towing.

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### **Van Breakdowns.**

If you should have a mechanical breakdown that causes the van to not be drivable, such as a flat tire, dead battery, engine failures, etc., the following will assist you in getting assistance:

1. If you are on an active roadway, make sure that you are safely off the road and away from traffic as far as is possible.
2. Call the VTN Office 843-789-7307 to report the problem
3. SCDOT - SHEP (State Highway Emergency Program)  
Call \*HP (\*47)

Incident Response Units assists motorists whose vehicles are experiencing mechanical problems and providing support and assistance to emergency response teams during incidents.

They are available in the following Zones in South Carolina:

See the attached color maps for the beginning and ending points of interstate service.

- Beaufort/Hilton Head ... US278 and SC170
- Charleston ... I-26, I-526 and US17
- Columbia ... I-20, I-26, I-126 and I-77
- Florence ... I-95 and I-20
- Myrtle Beach ... US17, US501, SC22 and SC31
- Rock Hill .... I-77
- Upstate ... I-26, I-85 and I-385

For assistance dial \*HP (\*47) on your cell phone.

Hours of Operation:

7am to 7pm (Monday - Friday)

9am to 7pm (Saturday)

9am to 5pm (Sunday)

**Drivers must not complete any repairs or maintenance on any government vehicles. This includes changing of vehicle tires. Drivers must take the vehicles in to a maintenance shop to have the necessary work completed.**

See the Map on the next page showing the areas of response on the Interstate roadways in the Charleston Area.

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Red exit numbers designate the beginning and ending points of interstate service. Highway I-26 from Exit 199 (Summerville) to exit 220 and Highway I-526 from exit 14 (West of the Ashley) to exit 28 (Mt Pleasant).

4. If SCDOT is not available or cannot assist you with your problem, then call the VTN Office 843-789-7307 for instructions on who to call for

assistance.

5. If you are outside of the Charleston area and need to be towed, you can call for a wrecker in whatever city you are in and use your credit card to pay for the towing.



Red exit numbers designate the beginning and ending points of interstate service. US-17 (from hwy 707 to hwy 22), US501 (from Conway to Myrtle Beach), and SC31 (from hwy 501 to hwy 22)

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Towing companies by area.

**\* Not listed by priority or preferences\***

### **Charleston**

Moore's Towing  
www.moorestowing.net  
1366 Fort Johnson Rd, Charleston, SC  
29412  
(843) 762-2421

Turky's Towing  
turkystowing.com  
369 Fleming Rd, Charleston, SC 29412  
(843) 766-8875

Craven's Towing Service  
www.cravenstowing.com  
9 Amy Elsey Dr, Charleston, SC 29407  
(843) 556-7676

American Towing Service  
www.american towing sc.com  
4550 Rivers Ave Ste A, North  
Charleston, SC 29405  
(843) 747-8500

Turky Burky's Auto Sales  
turkystowing.com  
25 Folly Road Blvd, Charleston, SC  
29407  
(843) 766-8875

Affordable Towing & Recovery Inc  
7124 Cross County Rd,  
North Charleston, SC 29418  
(843) 760-0520

Houston Crowder's Wrecker Service  
Open 24 Hours

3747 Rivers Ave,  
North Charleston, SC 29405  
(843) 747-4744

### **Mt. Pleasant**

Barefoot Towing Inc.  
1516 Wren Avenue Mount Pleasant, SC  
29464  
(843) 514-5409

### **Summerville SC**

Davis Towing  
www.davistowing.com  
140 Peytons Way, Summerville, SC  
29483  
(843) 851-7855

Jim's Towing and Transport  
914a College Park Rd, Summerville, SC  
29483  
(843) 810-1406

Rainbow Towing Incorporated  
124 Trolley Aly, Summerville, SC  
29485  
(843) 832-1890

Tiggers Towing  
103 Beaty Ln, Summerville, SC 29483  
(843) 875-0114

Reliable Towing & Roadside Assistance  
www.reliabletowingsc.com  
172 Danzid Dr, Summerville, SC 29483

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Coastal Recovery Svc  
202 Industrial Rd  
Summerville, SC 29483-3414  
(843) 821-7376

Affordable Hauling  
103 Beau Ct  
Summerville, SC 29485-5302  
(843) 412-2926

Barnes Towing  
909 Royle Rd  
Ladson, SC 29456-3048  
(843) 875-6609

Howdy Boy's Towing  
103 Markie Rd  
Summerville, SC 29483-8640

### **Moncks Corner**

Princes Towing & Storage  
3309 S Live Oak Dr  
Moncks Corner, SC 29461-8758

Hurry Up Towing  
408 Marshall Acres Dr  
Moncks Corner, SC 29461-2946

Elite Towing LLC  
2168 S Live Oak Dr  
Moncks Corner, SC 29461-8700  
(843) 761-3341

### **Ladson**

Jim's Towing  
(11.77 miles)  
516 College Park Rd  
Ladson, SC 29456-3328  
(843) 553-2244

### **Ridgeville**

Bandit Towing & Transport  
244 Church St  
Ridgeville, SC 29472-8057  
(843) 875-4129

Pearsons Towing  
266 Red Hill Rd  
Ridgeville, SC 29472-7640  
(843) 875-6910

### **Goose Creek**

Action Transport & Towing LLC  
369 Old Mount Holly Rd  
Goose Creek, SC 29445-2818  
(843) 824-1661