

EMPLOYEE HANDBOOK

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WELCOME TO COMFORT AT HOME

Congratulations! You have passed an unusually rigorous process to become a team member of COMFORT AT HOME. When we founded COMFORT AT HOME, we were looking for the best professionals in the field. Our vision is quite simple: Recruit the best and allow them to provide our client the best customer focused home care services. Unlike many, we provide only private duty services to our clients. They have very high expectations of COMFORT AT HOME and it is our mission to exceed those expectations every day.

While COMFORT AT HOME is new to this state, its leaders are experienced professional executives in home care services. As company we are committed to continually improving our services. We are counting on you to be creative in servicing our clients and sharing your ideas for improvement. We are also a learning organization, that will occasionally make mistakes, but we learn from those experiences how to improve and grow. We recognize that you are the company, when you are providing services to our clients. Your professionalism and pride in providing value to our clients is critical and essential to our mutual success.

This Employee Handbook is designed to be a guide to our policies and procedures many that are required by law. Please read it and any subsequent changes carefully. Thank You for joining a great team and a company that strives to set continued improving standards for the Private Home Care industry.

Sincerely,



Megan Mendez, RN, MSN

Administrator

GUIDING PRINCIPLES AND VALUES

The following reflects the guiding principles and values that will determine policies and procedures for **COMFORT AT HOME**:

- An Obsession for High Quality Customer Service and Continuous Improvement
- Team Member Participation in Company and Self Improvement
- Self-Responsibility for Team Work, Professionalism and Success
- Respect and Dignity for Fellow Team Members and Clients
- Absolute Confidentiality and Discretion regarding Client and Company Information
- Flexibility in Balancing a Productive Work Schedule with Family Responsibilities
- Ethics and Integrity are a Foundation of our Company

PERSONNEL POLICIES

SEXUAL HARASSMENT POLICY

COMFORT AT HOME believes that all employees are entitled to a work environment free from all forms of discrimination or harassment. This includes sexual harassment. This policy is applicable to all persons working for COMFORT AT HOME, employed or working as an independent contractor and includes management and administrative staff.

It is our policy that any unwelcome sexual advances either explicit or implicit are strictly prohibited. Any conduct whether verbal, visual or physical in nature is considered unacceptable.

COMFORT AT HOME Administration will make every effort to ensure that any complaints of sexual harassment or a hostile work environment will be investigated promptly, fairly and without fear of retaliation. Any employee found to have violated this policy will be subject to discipline and or discharge.

Any employee who feels that he/she has been subjected to sexual harassment should immediately report the incident to their supervisor. If the supervisor is the offender, then the employee should report the incident to the COMFORT AT HOME Administration. All reports will be kept confidential.

THE AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT (ADA)

COMFORT AT HOME is compliant with the Americans with Disabilities Act. Accommodations for individuals who are otherwise qualified for their positions and can, with reasonable accommodations perform the essential functions of their positions will be provided those accommodations. These accommodations will be provided as long as they do not create an undue hardship for the company and are without risk to the individual, other employee and/or clients. Any employee who requires an accommodation to perform the essential functions of their position should contact their supervisor or the COMFORT AT HOME Administration.

FAMILY MEDICAL LEAVE ACT

Any employee who has been employed for at least the 12 months prior to the request for leave, and have performed minimum of 1250 hours of service, are eligible to take Family/Medical Leave of Absence. (FMLA)

The following are qualified reasons for the request:

- The birth of and to care for a newborn child, adoption, or placement of a foster child (within 12 months of birth/placement)
- Care for a child, spouse or parent who is seriously ill
- Your own serious health condition

If you qualify for FMLA, you may receive up to 12 weeks of FMLA during a rolling 12-month period.

You may take the leave as a straight 12 weeks or by reducing your work schedule, taking intermittent scheduled leaves. If you elect to work a reduced schedule, your pay will reflect the change in hours worked.

All leaves must be approved by your supervisor and planned 30 days in advance, unless the leave is of an emergency nature. If the emergency is due to your own medical emergency, a family member should contact your supervisor as soon as possible. If the emergency is with another member of your family, contact your supervisor as soon as you are able to do so.

When the leave is for the birth, adoption or placement of a child, and both parents work for COMFORT AT HOME, the company reserves the right to limit the combined time to 12 weeks.

You will be required to submit verification of the medical nature of yours or your family member's condition. A birth certificate, adoption papers, or physician report etc. is acceptable. In the event the leave is for your own medical condition, you will be required to submit ongoing re-certifications by your physicians. Upon your return to work, you will be required to provide verification that you are able to perform the essential functions of your position with or without specified reasonable accommodations. A physician's release to return to work must be in writing listing any and all restrictions.

Upon return to work, you will be restored to your previous position, or an equivalent one, with the same pay and other terms and conditions of your employment, unless your position was eliminated due to a reduction in force, restructuring or other job elimination that was unrelated to your leave.

If the company considers your position a "key position", you may be denied reinstatement. You will be notified at the time of the request if you are considered to occupy one of those positions. Such a determination will be made if it is determined that there will be substantial harm to the company's operations and economic health by granting the leave.

EEOC

(EQUAL EMPLOYMENT AND AFFIRMATIVE ACTION)

It is the policy of COMFORT AT HOME, that all hiring placements, promotion and other personnel-related activities will be consistent with the established policy of this agency. COMFORT AT HOME will provide equal employment opportunity to all without regard to age, sex, sexual orientation, marital status, race, creed, color, national origin or the presence of any sensory, mental or physical handicap unless, based upon a bonafide occupational qualification.

DRUG AND ALCOHOL-FREE WORKPLACE

In compliance with the Drug-Free Workplace Act of 1988, COMFORT AT HOME adopts the following policy regarding the work-related effects of alcohol and drug use and the unlawful possession of controlled substances on the agency premises and during the working hours for COMFORT AT HOME Home Care Services.

1. Employees are expected and required to report to work on time and in appropriate mental and physical condition for work. It is the intent of COMFORT AT HOME to provide an alcohol and drug free, healthful, safe and secure working environment.
2. The unlawful manufacture, distribution, dispensation, possession, or use of a controlled substance on agency premises, or while conducting agency business offsite is absolutely prohibited. Violation of this policy will result in disciplinary action up to and including termination of employment and may have legal consequences.
3. The agency recognizes alcohol and drug abuse as a potential health safety and security problem. Employees needing help in dealing with such problems are encouraged to use available health resources and health insurance plans as appropriate. Conscientious efforts to seek such help will not jeopardize any employee's job and will not be noted in any personnel records.
4. Employees must, as a condition of employment, abide by the terms of the above policy and report any convictions under a criminal drug statute for violations occurring on or off agency premises while conducting business. A report of a conviction must be made within five (5) days after the conviction. (This requirement is mandated by the Drug-Free Workplace Act of 1988)

SOLICITATION

Out of respect for our customers and other employees, no person, employed or otherwise, may solicit or distribute literature in the workplace at any time for any purpose.

SMOKE-FREE WORKPLACE

COMFORT AT HOME abides by the laws and regulations in the State of Georgia regarding a smoke-free workplace. No smoking is allowed in the office or in client homes.

DRESS CODE

As an employee of COMFORT AT HOME, your appearance and behavior reflect directly on the company. Cleanliness and good grooming are essential to a professional appearance.

If you have an employment arrangement with another home care agency, you are **not** to wear your COMFORT AT HOME nametag or any apparel that has the Comfort at Home name or logo while on duty for the other agency. Clothing must be kept clean and pressed at all times. You will also be required to follow the following guidelines for other aspects of your appearance:

- Hair, beards, and mustaches washed and well groomed and a natural color
- No cologne or perfume, or cosmetics with fragrance
- Conservative makeup

- No excessive or dangling jewelry, or jewelry in unacceptable locations on your body, e.g. Nose rings
- No jeans, sweatshirts/pants or jogging suits
- No torn, stained or wrinkled clothing
- No open toed shoes, sandals or thongs
- No short skirts (Above the knees) or shorts

If your attire is deemed by management to not be appropriate, you will be asked to go home and change. You will not be compensated for the time off work to accomplish this. If you feel you need to wear something different than what the guidelines require, contact your supervisor.

GENERAL EMPLOYMENT TERMS AND WAIVERS

As an employee of COMFORT AT HOME, you expected to observe the following rules:

- You are not to seek employment directly or indirectly from any client to whom you have been assigned for at least one (1) year after your last day of assignment
- Client information is considered confidential and private. Sharing of such information with persons other than those who have a right to know, e.g., Patient's MD, agency clinical staff etc., is considered a breach of confidentiality.
- At no time is a client's privileged information to be shared with your family, friends or other clients. It is understood that a breach of confidentiality can have consequences up to and including termination. In some cases, there could be criminal charges.

USE OF COMPANY/CLIENTS PROPERTY

COMFORT AT HOME endeavors to provide an environment that is positive and supportive of its employees. As an employee, you are expected to treat property of the company, co-workers and clients with respect and care.

You are asked to report any lost, stolen, broken or damaged company property to your supervisor as soon as possible. Any company property checked out to you at the beginning of your employment is expected to be returned. Any equipment/property belonging to the company that is not returned at termination will be deducted from your final paycheck.

You are never to use the client's phone for personal calls. If it is necessary for you to call the office or one of the clinical staff to purpose of the client's car, you are to ask the client's permission to do so. This also applies to calls that you expect to come to you while on duty. Again, **no personal calls!! Never give the clients phone number to your family or friends.** If someone needs to reach you an emergency, instruct them to call the office. Occasional personal calls can be made on the company phones, so long as the calls not excessive in number and long distance.

PERFORMANCE APPRAISALS

COMFORT AT HOME is committed to your success. To assist you in accomplishing the highest possible level of performance, we will be providing you with an ongoing performance appraisal. At least yearly, you will receive and do a self-written evaluation. At least twice yearly, an on-site supervision will occur by your field supervisor. The areas that will be reviewed are:

- Quality of care
- Communications with patients and other staff
- Documentation
- Use of Universal Precautions
- Judgement
- Dedication to client care
- Customer service
- Dependability
- Attitude and appearance
- Initiative and motivation

Patients, their families, and other agency personnel will contribute to your appraisal through direct contact with the agency supervisory staff and through client satisfaction surveys.

The following guidelines are provided to assist you in providing the highest possible service to our customers.

- Always get direction to the patient's home if you are new to the assignment.
- Arrive on time to your assignments. If you are relieving another staff member, arrive a few minutes early so that you can get their daily report.
- Leave only when your shift is over. If the client tells you to go home early, you must report to the office before going. If a personal emergency arises, call the office immediately for assistance.
- If an employee who is scheduled to relieve you does not arrive, contact the office. **Do not leave the patient unattended.**
- Always keep in mind the clients needs and rights. You are there to be of service to the client. Respect their property and their right to privacy and confidentiality.
- Do not use the client's belongings for personal use, e.g., the TV or stereo.
- Do not eat the client's food unless other arrangements have been made (LiveOins and companion services may vary)
- Do not smoke or chew gum while on duty in the client's home.
- Do not bring personal valuables to your assignment.
- DO not bring children or pets to your assignment and do not have friends or family visit you at the client's home.
- Never give your phone number to clients. This is to protect your privacy. All communications must go through the office. Additionally, never give the clients number to your family or friends. They can reach you by calling the office.
- **Follow the plan of care exactly.** If you identify additional needs for the client, contact your case manager or nursing administration.

- Fill out all documents accurately, legibly and timely. Be sure to have the client sign your daily shift report.
- Do not accept gifts, loans or personal work from the clients or their family.
- Do not drive the client in your car or the client's car unless the appropriate forms have been filled out and you have permission from your supervisor.
- Never discuss personal problems, religious or political beliefs or other topics that may be objectionable to the client.
- **Always use Universal Precautions.**

EMPLOYEE CONDUCT

In order for COMFORT AT HOME and for you to be successful, certain applicable laws, policies, procedures and company rules must be followed. The following behaviors have been determined by COMFORT AT HOME to be by their very nature so harmful to our business that any participation on an employee's part may be grounds for immediate termination or other disciplinary action.

- Absence from work without notice, excessive absenteeism; failure to report to an assigned shift on time and without notice of the delay or to observe agreed upon working hours including overtime.
- Use, sale, possession or being under the influence of either drugs or alcoholic substances while on duty or otherwise engaged in company business.
- Possession of a weapon with or without permit while on duty
- Theft or dishonesty of any kind while on duty or off.
- Falsification of time sheets or other company records.
- Misappropriation or use of company property, other employee's personal property, or the client's property, including using either the company's or the client's home/office or phone for personal business.
- Gambling while on duty with either your own property or that of the clients.
- Insubordination, physical or verbal abuse of other COMFORT AT HOME employees, visitors or clients. General use of vulgar or inappropriate language or statements that could be considered discriminatory in nature and a violation prohibited by law. Inappropriate behaviors, unwanted advances or physical contact with other employees or clients.
- Non-cooperation with co-workers, supervisors and/or clients and their families.
- Substandard work performance
- Failure to follow Universal Precautions, safety rules and common sense with regard to safety of yourself and/or the client.
- Acceptance of work with a company client without notifying the office.
- Failure to respect the clients' own wishes/rules while in their home.
- Causing client complaints related to performance judgement, ethics or competency.
- Divulging confidential information either about the clients or the company's proprietary information, talking without authorization to outsiders, or holding unauthorized secondary employment.

Employees found to have violated company policies or laws may be subject to discipline. COMFORT AT HOME at its sole discretion, may institute the progressive disciplinary process. The process disciplinary process is as follows:

- Corrective Counseling/Verbal Warning
- Formal Reprimand/Written Warning
- Final Warning
- Termination

Depending on the nature of the offense, the formal process may be bypassed and the employee terminated immediately. No action will be taken against any employee without a full opportunity to state their side of the situation. If they are dissatisfied with the ruling of their supervisor, they may petition COMFORT AT HOME Administration, seeking and be granted a review by the Owner.

LEAVES OF ABSENCE

Jury Duty

Employees are encouraged to perform their civic duties by serving on a jury when called by the courts to do so or to appear as a witness in a trial. Time off will be granted to perform those duties.

Other Leaves

Military leave is granted to those employees who must be absent from work because of their service to our country. Employees returning from military leave will be placed in a position they would have attained had they remained in continuous employment with the company or in a comparable one depending upon the length of military service.

TIMEKEEPING AND PAYROLL

Accurate recording of time worked is the responsibility of all employees. Federal and state laws require that the agency keep an accurate record of time worked in order to calculate employee pay and taxes. Time sheets should reflect the actual time at the home or facility. Time sheets need to be neat and legible.

A time sheet is filed out for each client you care for during the week. **Each shift must be verified by client signature.** Failure to obtain the required signatures may cause a delay in payment to you, as all shifts must be verified by the client or their authorized agent in order for us to pay you. If two or more caregivers are providing services to the same client, each caregiver has their own timesheet for the client. This must be done to ensure that each caregiver is paid for the shifts/hours they actually work for the client.

When filling out a new time sheet at the beginning of the week, be sure to completely fill in all the information required at the top of the page. Without this information, we will not know who to pay or bill for the shifts listed on the time sheet. Time sheets must be received no later than 5:00 pm on Monday for the previous week. If you have an error on your timesheet and on your paycheck is issued the error will be corrected on your next check.

Falsifying of time sheets may result in disciplinary action up to and including termination.

Paydays are the 15th and the last day of the month. Payroll periods are from the 1st day of the month to the 15th and from the 16th to the end of the prior month. A check issued on the last day of the month is for the 1st to 15th of the current month. All bonuses are paid on the last day of the month for the previous month.

ORIENTATION AND CONTINUING EDUCATION

COMFORT AT HOME is committed to ongoing quality improvement of our services. Part of the improvement program is to assure that all employees receive a thorough orientation and opportunities for continued growth and learning. All employees of COMFORT AT HOME will be oriented to their respective job/role prior to beginning work with the company. The company also provides a schedule of continuing education opportunities. These schedules will be provided to you monthly. It is our expectation that employees feel as positive about their continued growth as the company does and will take advantage of the opportunities afforded wither by the company or outside agencies to learn.

Certain continuing education offerings are required on an annual basis;

- **Universal Precautions**
- **Infection control**
- **Safety**

In addition to the required in services above, all Certified Nursing Assistants (CAN) will be held accountable for obtaining the 8 hours a year of continuing education required by their license. Other personnel will also be expected to show evidence of ongoing education. Bonus and pay raises will be tied to evidence of the employees continued learning and growth.

Educational programs offered outside the agency may be attended at the company's expense. The company reserves the right to determine those programs for which reimbursement will be made to the employee. To be eligible for continuing education reimbursement, the employee must have worked at least 20 hours a week for a three-month period and get approval from the agency. Reimbursement will be on a prorated basis.

Employees who attend outside continuing education at the company's expense will be required to share the information gained, at a staff meeting, so that all the company employees can benefit from the educational investment.

EMPLOYMENT AT WILL

This handbook is not a contract, express or implied, guaranteeing employment for any specific duration. Although we hope your employment relationship with COMFORT AT HOME will be long term, either you or the company, may terminate this relationship at any time, for any reason, with or without cause or notice.

CRIMINAL BACKGROUND AND DRUG SCREENING INVESTIGATIONS

COMFORT AT HOME provides private duty home care services to individuals and families. These clients pay a premium for our services because of the character and competence of our professional field staff. It is therefore imperative that each of our team members has a background that reflects the excellent character and reputation of both the company and each of our fellow team members.

It is the policy of COMFORT AT HOME to conduct a battery extensive social security, felony, misdemeanor, and driver background investigations on all team members of COMFORT AT HOME, prior to employment. Professional investigative firms at the local, state and national levels conduct these investigations. The company reserves the right to conduct these investigations any time during the team member's tenure with the company.

The company is a drug-free work environment. It reserves the right to require any team member to submit to a drug screen, which will be determined by the company at its sole discretion. Every consideration will be taken to recognize and respect the dignity of the individual team member when collection specimens for drug screening tests.

CLIENT CARE SERVICES

COMFORT AT HOME believes that our primary purpose is to provide compassionate, quality, private care to the residents of our community. Our services are planned by skilled professionals who believe that every client is to be treated with respect, consideration, kindness, care and understanding. We safeguard the confidentiality of all client information. Services are provided that maintain or promote health, or in cases of terminal illness, provide a supported and comfortable death.

We understand that personal care is one of the more intimate and basic functions of people's lives. Services are provided with the utmost of respect and privacy for our clients. We also understand that illness and infirmity make the individual vulnerable. With that understanding, the staff of COMFORT AT HOME assure by their plans of care and by their execution of those plans that clients are safe and free from harmful influences, direct or indirect at all times. Compassion, tenderness, and loving attention to the details of our client's care are a standard for all COMFORT AT HOME employees.

As employees of COMFORT AT HOME, you are an essential member of the team providing our client's care. No client is ever denied services based on age, race, color, national origin, religion, sex, disability, a veteran, sexual orientation or any other category protected by law.

CLIENT CARE POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

As employee of COMFORT AT HOME, you will be expected to follow the policies and procedures established by the agency. The following policies and procedures are provided to you so that you may refer to them on a regular basis. They were covered in your orientation program and you were asked to sign a checklist indicating topics covered. All employees shall have access to the policies and procedure manuals. If you have questions regarding administrative practices or client care, you may consult with your supervisor, or consult the Policies and Procedures Manual located in the agency office.

Copies of selected important topics follows.

Category: Rights, Responsibilities, and Ethics

Number: 3.003.3

Subject: **Abuse and Neglect**

Applies: All Staff

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Purpose: To assure compliance with State laws on abuse and neglect.

Policy: Agency employees and independent contractors shall report all actual or suspected cases of abuse, neglect, exploitation, or abandonment of a client, client or vulnerable adult to an agency supervisor. If agency personnel detect or has reasonable cause to believe that any signs of family violence, abuse or neglect has occurred and the need for protective services must be reported to the employee's supervisor.

Definitions: Abuse means the negligent or willful inflection of injury, unreasonable confinement, intimidation, or cruel punishment with resulting physical or emotional harm or pain to an elderly or disabled person by the person's caretaker, family member or other individual who has an ongoing relationship with the person; or sexual abuse of an elderly or disabled person, including any involuntary or nonconsensual sexual conduct that would constitute an offense, (indecent exposure, assault offenses), committed by the person's caretaker, family member, or other individual who has an ongoing relationship with the person.

Neglect means the failure to provide for the physical needs, a goods or services, including medical services which are necessary to avoid physical or emotional harm or pain or the failure of a caretaker to provide such goods or services.

Exploitation means the illegal or improper act or process of a caretaker, family member, or other individual who has an ongoing relationship with an elderly or disabled person using the resources of such person for monetary or personal benefit, profit, or gain without the informed consent of such person.

Emergency Procedures

The agency staff will implement appropriate actions for clients in an emergency situation.

Procedure:

1. Medical emergency / life threatening situation:
 - a. Call emergency rescue services 911 or direct a member of the family to call
 - b. Stay with the client until the emergency rescue service arrives
 - c. Call Administrative staff and report the emergency situation, only after help has arrived.
2. Change in the Client condition:
 - a. Any changes in the client's condition will be reported immediately to the Administrative staff.
 - b. The Administrative staff will determine the appropriate intervention for the client and instruct the Caregivers
3. Death of a Client:
 - a. If the Client dies when the caregivers is present, or is found dead by the Caregivers, Administrative staff is to be contacted immediately. Administrative staff will instruct the Caregivers in appropriate interventions, contact family members and the coroner's office.
4. If the Client does not answer the door and the Caregiver has reason for concern about the Client's safety:
 - a. Call the Administrative staff and report the situation.
 - b. Summons appropriate assistance as directed by Administrative staff to gain entry into the home to verify that the client is safe.

Reporting Progress and Problems

It is important that supervisory personnel be notified of any changes in the client's condition. All staff will record on the client's Progress Report any changes observed in the client. This is to include progress and problems.

Procedure: Change in the Client condition:

- a) Any changes in the client's condition will be reported immediately to Supervisor.
- b) The change is recorded on the client's Progress report with time and date and initialed by caregiver
- c) The Supervisor will determine the appropriate intervention for the client and instruct the Caregivers accordingly.

TITLE: MEDICATIONS

POLICY:

COMFORT AT HOME complies with the State laws and appropriate professional acts and provisions which stipulate the assistance and administration of medications by home care and personal care aides.

PURPOSE:

1. To assure compliance with the State laws regarding the assistance and administration of medications in the home.
2. To assure proper documentation of medication used by clients.

PROCEDURE:

1. A client or his or her family may request self-administration with assistance. The decision to authorize/provide self-administered medication assistance is made in concert with the client/family and an authorized practitioner. The practitioner considers such factors as the physical and mental limitations of the individual and the setting or environment in which the individual can safely self-administer with assistance. Practitioners include physician, osteopathic physician, podiatric physician, dentist, licensed practical nurse, registered nurse, advanced registered nurse practitioner and a pharmacist. These authorized practitioners must be re-involved in the event that there is a change in the medications, physical or mental limitations of the client or an environment change.
2. The Home Care/Personal care Aide is limited to assistance with medications ordinarily self-administered by the client. This assistance is limited to:
 - a. Reminding the client when it is time to take a medication.
 - b. Reading the label of the medication container.
 - c. Handing the client-owned medication container to the client.
 - d. Opening the medication container.
 - e. Use of an enabler or placing the medication in the hand of the client
3. Enablers are physical devices used to facilitate a client's self-administration of medication such as medicine cup, glass, cup, spoon, bowl, pre-filled syringes, syringes used to measure liquids, especially adapted table surfaces, straws pieces of cloth or fabric.
4. Medication with assistance included steadying or guiding an individual's hand while he or she applies or instills medications such as ointments eye, ear, and nasal preparations. Hand over hand is not allowed.

5. The client must be able to put the medication into his or her mouth or apply or instill the medication.
6. If a client is not able to physically ingest or apply a medication independently or with assistance or is not aware that are taking medications, then the medications must be administered by an individual legally authorized to do so. A nurse assistant is not considered an authorized individual under these circumstances.
7. Self-administration with assistance shall occur immediately prior to the ingestion or application of a medicine.
8. Other types of assistance may include pouring liquid medication from the medication container into a calibrated spoon or medication cup.
9. Medication assistance shall be documented on the appropriate agency form and recorded as per client/family requests in the home.
10. A list of all current medications is kept in the client's record.

TITLE: INFECTION CONTROL/UNIVERSAL PRECAUTIONS

POLICY:

COMFORT AT HOME staff maintains an infection control procedure and adhere to the use of universal precautions (recommended by the Center for Disease Control) to prevent transmission of infectious disease.

PURPOSE:

1. To control the spread of infection.
2. To protect individuals from transmission of communicable/infectious diseases.
3. To ensure that agency staff is knowledgeable about and practice universal precautions.

PROCEDURE:

1. All new staff will at orientation and annually thereafter receive training regarding the agency's infectious control procedures including; use of universal precautions, preventative practices, waste disposal procedures, handling and cleaning procedures, communicable disease reporting, reporting of exposure, and post-exposure procedures.
2. Hand washing will occur before and after client contact, and immediately and thoroughly if contaminated with blood or body fluids, and after gloves are removed.
3. Disposable gloves will be worn when handling body fluids.
4. Disposable gloves will be worn when handling or cleaning objects, surfaces or materials are contaminated with body fluids.
5. Any surfaces contaminated with body fluids must be cleaned with a disinfectant solution made of 1 part of household bleach to 10 parts of water.
 - a. Clean the surface with soap and water before it is disinfected with bleach solution to avoid the release of noxious fumes.
 - b. Water used to clean contaminated surfaces or clothing should be flushed down the toilet.
 - c. Body fluids sponged or wiped up should also be flushed down the toilet; not the kitchen or bathroom sink.
 - d. Sponges or kitchen towels used to clean counters and dishes should never be used to clean the floor or to clean bathroom spills.
 - e. Mops or articles used to clean body fluids, should be washed and soaked using the above disinfectant solution, do not rinse in the kitchen sink.

- f. Do not clean and disinfect these articles in areas where food preparation and cooking occur.
 - g. When cleaning equipment used by the Client, use the disinfectant bleach solution described above unless otherwise directed by the client or family.
 - h. Soiled clothing, towels, linen, etc., should be washed in water with a detergent and bleach (if washing colored articles, use powered bleach safe for colored fabrics).
 - i. When handling clothing or articles soaked with body fluids, wear gloves and wash the clothing separately from other items.
6. Clients using needles in the home will be required to use an appropriate container for disposal.
 7. Agency staff who have open sores or weeping dermatitis will not provide direct client care or handle client equipment until the condition is resolved.
 8. Potential exposure to infectious disease by agency personnel will be reported to the Administrator immediately.
 9. Agency staff who are immunosuppressed will not be assigned to clients where there is a significant risk of substantial harm to them from an infectious disease.
 10. Agency personnel who are known to be pregnant will not be assigned to clients where there is a significant risk of substantial harm to the fetus from infectious diseases.

TITLE: ADMISSON CRITERIA

POLICY:

Clients are accepted by COMFORT AT HOME based on an initial assessment visit and a reasonable expectation that the service needs of the client can be met.

PURPOSE:

To establish admission criteria for acceptance of maintenance clients who request Private Home Care Provider (PHCP) Services.

PROCEDURE:

1. Referrals for PHCP services are received in the agency by the Branch Director/Professional Services Director.
2. Requests for PHCP services are documented on the referral/intake form.
3. The Branch Director/Professional Services Director assesses the client referral for appropriateness of admission consistent with the following criteria:
 - Maintenance Care
 - a. The health care services of the client are non-acute and meet the criteria for maintenance care.
 - b. The client's care is documented in the PHCP Plan of Care.
 - c. The client's needs can be adequately and safely met with PHCP services.
4. Clients referred but not accepted for care by the agency will be referred to other providers in the community.
5. Referral Sources will be notified of reasons that a client is not accepted for services
6. The final decision to admit clients for care by the PHCP agency is made at the time of the initial assessment visit to the home.

TITLE: TRANSFER OF CLIENTS

POLICY:

COMFORT AT HOME will transfer clients to other agencies when it is unable to meet the client's needs or the client or the client or family requests a transfer of services. A completed discharge summary with full information will be provided to assure continuity of care for the client.

PURPOSE:

1. To define the criteria for the transfer of clients.
2. To ensure continuity of care.

PROCEDURE:

1. Clients will be transferred to another community agency or facility when:
 - a. There is not adequate staff to meet the client's need for services.
 - b. The skills, abilities and resources of the COMFORT AT HOME are not adequate to meet the needs of the client.
 - c. The Administrator does not believe that the client's care needs can be safely met by COMFORT AT HOME
 - d. The client and/or family request a transfer to another provider.
 - e. The client is transferred to a hospital, nursing home or other facility.
 - f. The client moves out of the service area covered by COMFORT AT HOME
2. COMFORT AT HOME will send a summary of the clinical record, and the current Plan of Care to the receiving agency or facility to aid in the transfer within three working days.
3. An initial telephone report will be made to the receiving agency to inform them of the client's condition and needs.

TITLE: DISCHARGE CRITERIA

POLICY:

COMFORT AT HOME has established criteria for discharging clients.

PURPOSE:

To define criteria for the discharge of clients from service.

PROCEDURE:

1. Discharge from services is appropriate when any of the following conditions exist:
 - a. The client or family requests termination of services.
 - b. The client does not comply or cooperate with the established Plan of Care.
 - c. The client's status worsens and hospitalization, nursing home care or a level of care becomes appropriate.
 - d. Another person (e.g., a family member) is capable of providing the required services and has been prepared to assume this responsibility.
 - e. The client or family demonstrates inappropriate, abusive, or violent behavior which compromises staff safety.
 - f. The home is judged to be unsafe for agency personnel.
 - g. The client moves beyond the geographic area serviced by COMFORT AT HOME
2. The client and or family will be informed of any impending discharge from services in writing with a minimum of a three-day notice unless it has been judged that the staff are at risk, in which case services may be terminated immediately and followed with a written statement regarding the cause of termination of services.
3. The reasons for discharging the client will be documented in the clinical record in the form of a summary statement.
4. Clients needing follow-up care upon discharge from the PHCP agency will be referred to other community provider.

TITLE: COORDINATION OF SERVICES

POLICY:

COMFORT AT HOME agency staff promotes continuity of care through effective interchange, reporting, and evaluation of client care.

PURPOSE:

1. To provide coordinated services that support the Plan of Care
2. To provide a vehicle for efficient communications among the various disciplines involved in providing care to clients.
3. To coordinate interagency and intra-agency services.

PROCEDURE:

1. The Administrator coordinates client services through communication with all staff providing services to the client.
2. Care coordination may include, but are not limited to:
 - a. Client assessment.
 - b. Client intervention.
 - c. Client reassessment.
 - d. Development/implementation of plans of care, covering diagnosis, mental status, types of home care services and equipment required, nutritional requirements, medications and treatments, safety measures to protect against injury.
 - e. Services provided to the client by other community agencies.
3. The content and results of the care coordination are documented on the agency progress or service record.
4. The Branch Director/Professional Services Director may call together all members of the care team to discuss the Plan of care whenever appropriate.
5. The Brand Director/Professional Services Director is responsible for coordinating services that may be provided to the client by other community agencies.

Category: Rights, Responsibilities, and Ethics

Number: 3.001.1

Subject: **Client Conduct, Responsibility and Rights**

Applies: All Staff and Clients / Caregivers

Page 1 of 5

Purpose: To ensure that Clients and Agency understand their respective responsibilities and rights.

Policy: Ensure that the agency promotes and protects the client's rights.

Agency Responsibilities:

The Agency staff will ensure that during the initial evaluation visit before initiation of treatment, that the client or their legal representative receives a written notice concerning all policies governing client conduct and responsibility and client rights.

The client will be informed in advance about the care to be furnished, the plan of care, expected outcomes, barriers to treatment and any changes in the care to be furnished. The client has the right to participate in the planning of the care or treatment and in planning changes in the care or treatment. Including frequency of visits, the person supervising the clients and the manner in which that person may be contacted.

The Agency must advise or consult with the client or legal representative in advance of any change in the plan of care.

The client has the right to refuse any/all treatment to the extent permitted by law after being fully informed of and understanding the possible consequences of such action, without relinquishing any other portions of the treatment plan except where medical contraindication of partial treatment exists.

The client has the right to be informed, before care is initiated, of the extent to which payment may be expected from the client, third party payer, and any other source of funding known to the Agency and what services are offered by the agency.

The Agency will protect and promote a client's rights.

The client has the right to be free from verbal, physical and psychological abuse or harassment of any form and to be treated with consideration, respect and full recognition of your dignity and individuality, including privacy in treatment and care for personal needs.

Category: Rights, Responsibilities, and Ethics

Number: 3.001.1

Subject: **Client Conduct, Responsibility and Rights**

Applies: All Staff and Clients / Caregivers

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The client has the right to have assistance in understanding and exercising his or her rights.

The consumer or authorized representative has the right to be informed of the consumer's rights through an effective means of communication.

The client has the right to exercise his or her rights as a client of the Agency.

In the case of a client adjudged incompetent, the rights of the client are exercised by the person appointed by law to act on the client's behalf.

The client has the right to be informed about the individuals providing his or her care and upon requests to the agency, has the right to be informed of the full name, licensure status, staff position and employer of all persons with whom the consumer has contact and who is supplying, staffing or supervising care or services. The consumer has the right to be served by agency staff that is properly trained and competent to perform their duties. Be able to identify visiting staff through proper identification.

The client has the right to be informed about all available services, fee schedule, and billing mechanisms. Any changes in such must be given to the client in writing and orally as soon as possible but no later than thirty (30) days from the date the agency becomes aware of a change.

The client has the right to be free from neglect, financial exploitation, verbal, physical and psychological abuse including humiliation, intimidation or punishment.

The client has the right to be informed about criteria for admission to service and discharge.

Right of the client or designated representative to be fully informed of client's health condition, unless contraindicated by a physician in the client record.

In the case of a client who has been adjudged incompetent, any legal representative may exercise the client's right to the extent permitted by law.

The client has the right to have his or her person and property treated with consideration, respect, and full recognition of his or her individuality and personal needs.

Category: Rights, Responsibilities, and Ethics

Number: 3.001.1

Subject: **Client Conduct, Responsibility and Rights**

Applies: All Staff and Clients / Caregivers

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The client has the right to confidential treatment of his or her personal and medical records and the agency requires a written consent for release of information to persons not otherwise authorized under law to receive it.

The client has the right to choose a health care provider, including the physician.

The client has the right to voice grievances regarding treatment or care that is or fails to be furnished, or regarding the lack of respect for property by anyone who is furnished services on behalf of the Agency and must not be subjected to discrimination or reprisal for doing so.

The client has the right to live free from involuntary confinement, and to be free from physical or chemical restraints.

Before the care is initiated, the agency must inform a client orally and in writing of the following:

- The extent to which payment may be expected from third party payers; and
- The charges for services that will not be covered by third party payers; and
- The charges that the client may have to pay; and
- The agency must inform a client orally and in writing of any changes in these charges as soon as possible, but no later than five (5) days from the date the home care agency provider becomes aware of the change;
- If an agency is implementing a scheduled rate increase to all clients, the agency shall provide a written notice to each affected consumer at least thirty (30) days before implementation.
- The agency shall not assume power of attorney or guardianship over a consumer utilizing the services of the agency, require a consumer to endorse checks over to the agency or require a consumer to execute or assign a loan, advance, finance interest, mortgage or other property in exchange for future services.

A client has the right to have access, upon request, to all bills for service he has received regardless of whether they are paid by him or by another party.

A client has the right to have access to their medical record.

A client has the right to be informed about advanced directive information prior to start of care.

Category: Rights, Responsibilities, and Ethics

Number: 3.001.1

Subject: **Client Conduct, Responsibility and Rights**

Applies: All Staff and Clients / Caregivers

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A client has the right to at least five (5) days written notice when the Agency determines to terminate services.

A client has the right to be informed of the state's home care agency hotline and the hours of its operation of service in order to obtain information about home care agencies, to lodge complaints concerning the implementation of the advance directives requirements or to report abuse, neglect or exploitation, as applicable:

Department of Community Health

Healthcare Facility regulation Division

Two Peachtree Street NW

Atlanta, GA 30303-3159

404-657-5850

Complaints Only: 404-657-5728

Client Responsibilities:

- To ask questions of the staff about anything they do not understand concerning their treatment or services provided.
- TO provide complete and accurate information concerning their present health, medication, allergies, etc.
- To inform staff of their health history, including past hospitalization, illnesses, injuries.
- To involve themselves and/or Caregiver, as needed and as able, in developing, carrying out, and modifying their home care services plan.
- To review the Agency's information on maintaining a safe and accessible home environment in their residence.
- To request additional assistance or information on any phase of their health care plan they do not fully understand.
- To inform the staff when a health condition or medication change has occurred.
- To notify the Agency when they will not be home for a scheduled home care visit.
- To notify the Agency prior to changing their place of residence or telephone.
- To notify the Agency when encountering any problem with equipment, or services.
- To notify the Agency if they are to be hospitalized or if a physician modified or ceases their home care prescription.
- To make a conscious effort to comply with all aspects of the plan of care.
- To notify the Agency when payment source changes.
- To notify the Agency of any changes in or the execution of any advanced directives.
- To inform staff of their health history, including past hospitalization and illnesses.

Category: Rights, Responsibilities, and Ethics

Number: 3.001.1

Subject: **Client Conduct, Responsibility and Rights**

Applies: All Staff and Clients / Caregivers

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PROCEDURE:

The Agency staff will obtain written consent / Service Agreement that specifies the type of care and services that may be provided by the Agency on every client, either by client or legal representative. The client or the legal representative must sign or mark the consent form.

The Service Agreement will contain a signature line for the Client / representative and Agency staff indicating compliance with State and Federal regulatory mandates including Client Rights and Advanced Directives.

Category: Rights, Responsibilities, and Ethics

Number: 3.003.1

Subject: **Clients Complaints and Grievances**

Applies: All Staff

Page 1 of 3

Purpose: To establish a mechanism by which client complaints and grievances may be heard and resolved.

Policy: Clients may voice concerns and grievances regarding any aspect of care/ service without fear of coercion, discrimination, reprisal or unreasonable interruption in service.

Procedure:

- Give the client a copy and instruct him/her on “Client Grievance Procedure” upon admission. Client receipt of procedure documented per signature of consent.
- Any staff member may receive a complaint or grievance.
- Staff members report complaints or grievances to Administrator or designee.
- Administrator or designee documents and investigate the grievance/complaint within 10 calendar days of receipt of the complaint. The Administrator or designee must complete the investigation and documentation within 30 calendar days after the Agency received the complaint unless the Agency has and documents reasonable cause of delay.
- If the Administrator or designee is unable to resolve the complaint/grievance, the Governing Body is notified and takes action toward resolution.
- Notify the client when appropriate action has been taken or that the problem has been restored.
- Document the complaint or grievance, action taken and resolution on the Client Complaint Log or Report.
- The client may contact at any time without reprisal or disruption in services the:

Department of Community Health Healthcare Facility Regulation Division Atlanta, GA 30303-3159 404-657-5850 Complaints Only: 404-657-5728	CHAP 1275 K Street NW Suite 800 Washington, DC 20005 202.862.3413	Comfort at Home 3540-Wheeler Rd., Suite 201 Augusta, GA 30909 Phone: 706-945-2334
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Your Rights & Responsibilities as Home Care Client

Comfort at home, as a home care provider, has an obligation to protect the rights of our clients and explain these rights to you before service begins. Your family or your designee may exercise these rights for you in the event that you are not competent or able to exercise them for yourself.

As a client you have:

1. The right to be informed about your plan of service and the right to participate in the planning
2. The right to be promptly and fully informed of any changes in the service plan before any scheduled service begins.
3. The right to accept or refuse service.
4. The right to be fully informed of the charges for the services provided.
5. The right to be informed of the name, business telephone number, and the business address of the person supervising the services and how to contact that person.
6. The right to be informed of the complaint procedures and the right to submit complaints without fear of discrimination or retaliation and to have them investigated by the provider within a reasonable period of time. The complaint procedure provided shall include the name, business address and telephone number of the person designated by the provider to handle complaints and questions.
7. The right of confidentiality of all client information.
8. The right to have your property and residence treated with respect.
9. The right to receive a written notice of the address and telephone number of the state licensing authority, i.e., the department, which further explains that the department is charged with the responsibility of licensing the provider and investigating client complaints which appear to violate regulations.
10. The right to obtain a copy of the provider's most recent completed report of licensure inspection from the provider upon written request. The provider is not required to release the report of licensure inspection until the provider has had an opportunity to file a written plan of correction for the violations, if any, identified.

TITLE: CLIENT CLINICAL RECORD

POLICY:

COMFORT AT HOME maintains a clinical record for each client served in accordance with accepted professional standards.

PURPOSE:

1. To ensure complete and legal documentation of client clinical records regarding home care.
2. To ensure the safety and confidentiality of clinical records and information.

PROCEDURE:

1. Client clinical records are maintained in accordance with accepted professional standards and are considered confidential.
2. Clinical records will contain at least the following:
 - a. Appropriate identifying information.
 - b. Client service agreements and consents.
 - c. Pertinent medical history.
 - d. Assessment of client physical, mental, social and environmental problems effecting care.
 - e. Drug and dietary requirements.
 - f. Clinical notes and flow sheets completed on the day the service is rendered.
 - g. Signed and dated clinical notes.
 - h. Reports from consulting professionals
 - i. Client discharge summary.
3. A chart order of content is maintained for each client clinical record.
4. All clinical records are secured in locked file cabinets and are protected against loss, destruction, unauthorized use and disclosure.
5. Clinical record information is released only as required by law, regulations or written permission of the client or the client's legal representative.
6. In the event a client is transferred to another agency or health care facility, a copy of the clinical record, or a summary report will be forwarded to the new provider

CUSTOMER SERVICE

As employees of COMFORT AT HOME, you are “the company” to the clients. Your attitude, behavior and conduct reflect directly on the company. We have three primary sets of customers; **our employees, our referral sources and our clients and their families.** We value all our customers and recognize that every one of them must be treated with respect, dignity and fairness.

As one of our customers we endeavor to meet your expectation as you employer. You are entitled to be compensated fairly for what you do and to be honored and rewarded for your success. We also expect you to remember that your fellow workers are your customers and are to be treated with all the courtesy and respect that is accorded you.

Our referral sources count on us to provide excellent quality care to the clients they have referred to us. We consider this a sacred trust. We look to you, our employee, to assist us in honoring this trust.

Our clients may have viewpoints on people, places and things that we do not agree with. It is important that you do not express your opposition to their views or try to ‘educate’ them. Please don’t initiate conversations about religious and / or political topics. Some of our clients enjoy talking about these subjects and may bring them up. Please use your discretion about getting involved in these conversations.

Problems can possibly arise when our senior clients change or cancel our visits without their families’ knowledge. Often family members hire and pay us to work with their loved ones. This makes them the “client” and the “senior” the applicant receiving services. Sometimes the “senior” may try to cancel their time with you, which would be contrary to what the family desires. Most often when this happens, there is some dementia involved, and the family feels strongly that the “senior” really still needs to be seen by us.

This can be a delicate situation because we always we want to respect our senior’s rights. Whenever this situation comes up be sure to call the office (706-45-2334) (preferably before you leave the building, or before the scheduled client time). The office will help you sort this out.

Finally, clients look to us to provide the most intimate and personal of services. The quality of their lives depends on what we do or do not do. We believe that our customers are entitled to our going “the extra mile” for them. We empower you, our employee to do just that. If you find a customer has a special like or wish, discuss it with your case manager or supervisor.

The success of COMFORT AT HOME depends on you.

PERSONAL SAFETY

COMFORT AT HOME is committed to maintaining a hazard free and safe environment for our employees. WE consider your safety a priority. Training is provided to you so that you will be safe in your assignments. We will also enforce and practice safe work procedures.

Should you become aware of any conditions that might put you at risk, you are to inform your supervisor immediately. All incidents will be considered important. Unsafe conditions will be corrected as soon as management is aware of the condition.

In addition to trying to assure a safe work environment, we want you to be safe when you are in the community. The following are simple safety rules that you should follow whether you are on duty or out on your own.

- Car safety: even when driving in a neighborhood you know and feel safe in, lock your doors and windows. Never leave your nursing bag or other packages on the seat where they can be seen.
- Personal safety: never carry large sums of money or other valuables. Leave expensive jewelry and credit cards at home.
- Street Safety: always park in a lighted location as close to your client's home as possible. Avoid walking through unlit areas alone. If you feel you are being followed, go to the nearest house or business and seek help.
- Safety in the client's home: if you arrive at your assignment and find that the client or one of the client's friends or family members is intoxicated, acting hostile, or appears to be engaged in illegal activity and you feel that you and/or the client is at risk, remove yourself and the client to a safe place and call the office for direction. Additionally, when in the client's home, do not leave your purse or nursing bag where others such as children, neighbors or delivery people can have access to them.
- Protection against accusations of theft: if your client has large sums of money, jewelry or other valuables around the house in an unsecured area, report the findings to your supervisor immediately. **Do not remove the valuables yourself.** COMFORT AT HOME administration will assume responsibility to inform the family. Do not accept gifts or money. Clients may offer in all good faith, then forget and report it stolen the next day. Do not handle client's finances except those directly related to the care plan. Report any theft, damage or loss of their personal effects immediately.

In the final analysis, good "common sense" is your best defense against an unsafe or compromising situation. If you feel unsafe, trust your "gut", exit the situation and call the office for direction.

Please sign below acknowledging you have read this Employee Handbook.



Megan Mendez, RN, MSN

Administrator

Caregiver

Date