



Happy Living Options LLC
2200 E Franklin Ave #205, Minneapolis, MN 55404 ·
763-388-6961 · happylivingoptionsllc1@gmail.com ·
DHS License #1103321

STAFF HANDBOOK
Doc HB-01



CAREGIVER STAFF HANDBOOK

Direct Support Professional Policies & Legal Requirements

Happy Living Options LLC, DHS License #1103321

Prepared by Consultant Services of MN, Joe McDaniel

*This handbook is a compliance template built from current Minnesota and federal law as cited throughout, and from the Agency's Complete Program Policy Manual. Sections marked **REQUIRED BY LAW** summarize an actual statutory or regulatory duty; sections marked **AGENCY POLICY** go beyond what the law specifically requires, as a matter of the Agency's own standards. It has not been reviewed by an attorney, have it reviewed by qualified counsel before adoption, and confirm current rates, phone numbers, and thresholds noted in this document before distributing it, since several of the laws summarized here changed recently and continue to change.*

Issued to: _____

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Welcome to Happy Living Options LLC

Thank you for joining the Happy Living Options LLC team. As a caregiver (Direct Support Professional, or DSP), you help the people we serve live safely, with dignity, and as independently as possible in their own homes and communities. This handbook explains the laws and Agency policies that apply specifically to your day-to-day work as a caregiver: training, background studies, electronic visit verification, mandated reporting, professional boundaries, drug and alcohol rules, and Minnesota's paid leave laws.

This handbook supplements, and does not replace, the Agency's Complete Program Policy Manual, which contains the full set of 245D program policies. If anything here appears to conflict with the Manual or with a current DHS requirement, the most current legal requirement controls, tell your supervisor right away so the conflict can be corrected.

NOTE: Throughout this handbook, a REQUIRED BY LAW tag means the rule comes from a specific state or federal statute, cited in that section. An AGENCY POLICY tag means the rule is the Agency's own standard, often built on top of a legal requirement, but not itself independently required by that statute. This distinction matters: legal requirements cannot be waived by anyone at the Agency, while Agency policies can be updated by Agency leadership as needed.



HB-01 Your Role as a Caregiver

Every person you support has an individual support plan or Coordinated Service and Support Plan (CSSP) that defines the services you are authorized to provide, how, and by whom. Your job is to provide exactly those services, safely, respectfully, and consistent with that plan, not to improvise services the plan does not authorize.

- Treat every person you serve with dignity, patience, and respect for their own choices, culture, and communication style.
- Provide only the services described in the person's support plan or support plan addendum; if you believe a person needs something outside that plan, tell your supervisor rather than providing it yourself.
- Show up on time, in appropriate attire, and ready to work every scheduled shift; call your supervisor immediately if you cannot make a shift.
- Document your visits accurately and on time, through EVV and any required paper documentation (see HB-04).
- Know how to reach your supervisor and the Agency's after-hours/emergency contact at all times you are on shift.

Minn. Stat. § 245D.071 (person-centered service planning and delivery).



HB-02 Eligibility to Work: Background Studies

REQUIRED BY LAW

Before you may have direct contact with a person served, and before any unsupervised direct contact, Minnesota law requires the Agency to complete a background study on you through the Department of Human Services' NETStudy system, including a fingerprint-based check of state and FBI criminal history records.

- You may not have unsupervised direct contact with a person served until your background study is cleared.
- If any person you are assigned to serve is a minor (under 18), state law requires an expanded check for programs serving minors, including a search of the child abuse and neglect registry in every state you have lived in over the past five years. Your supervisor will let you know if this applies to your assignment.
- You have an ongoing duty to tell your supervisor immediately if you are arrested, charged, or convicted of a crime, or become subject to a maltreatment finding, while employed by the Agency, this can affect your eligibility to continue working with the people we serve.

Minn. Stat. ch. 245C, including §§ 245C.03, 245C.08.



HB-03 Orientation & Training Requirements

New Hire Orientation

REQUIRED BY LAW

Before providing unsupervised direct contact services, you must complete orientation covering these topics, required under Minn. Stat. § 245D.09, subd. 4:

1. Your job description, functions, reporting relationships, and expectations, including safety rules and incident reporting.
2. The Agency's current policies and procedures relevant to your duties.
3. Data privacy practices, including HIPAA if applicable to the Agency's services.
4. The service recipient rights described in Minn. Stat. § 245D.04.
5. Maltreatment reporting requirements under Minn. Stat. §§ 245A.65, 245A.66, 626.557, and Minn. Stat. ch. 260E.
6. Person-centered planning and service delivery principles.
7. The definitions of manual restraint and other restrictive interventions.
8. Prohibited procedures under Minn. Stat. § 245D.06, subd. 5.
9. Basic first aid.
10. Minimizing the risk of sexual violence and following related agency policies.
11. Topics specific to the needs of the people on your caseload, as identified in their support plans.

Person-Specific Training, Before Unsupervised Contact

REQUIRED BY LAW

For each person you will support, you must also be trained on that person's own support plan, and, where applicable, medication procedures (with a documented competency evaluation), medical equipment operation, mental health crisis response, and activities of daily living relevant to that person, before you have unsupervised direct contact with them.

Minn. Stat. § 245D.09, subd. 4a.

Annual Training

REQUIRED BY LAW

Each year, you must complete refresher training covering topics 3 through 11 above (data privacy through person-specific topics); annual refresher training does not need to repeat topics 1 and 2 (job description and current policies), those are new-hire topics only. If your basic first aid certification is current, you do not need to repeat the annual first aid topic while the certification remains valid.

Minn. Stat. § 245D.09, subd. 5.

Mandated Reporter Orientation, Two Separate Clocks

REQUIRED BY LAW

Maltreatment reporting orientation runs on two different timelines depending on who is being oriented:

- Persons served receive an explanation and copy of the maltreatment reporting policy within 24 hours of admission (up to 72 hours where a later orientation clearly benefits the person).



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- You, as staff, must complete mandated reporter orientation within 72 hours of first providing direct contact services (not your date of hire), and annually thereafter.

Minn. Stat. § 245A.65, subds. 1, 3.

Completing Training Through CareCertify

AGENCY POLICY

The Agency uses CareCertify, an online training platform, to deliver and track much of the required orientation and annual training described above. You complete your assigned CareCertify courses at your own pace, on any device; completion is automatically logged and a certificate is issued for your personnel file. Your supervisor will tell you which CareCertify courses are assigned to you and by when.

NOTE: CareCertify is a private training vendor, not a state-approved or DHS-certified program, Minnesota DHS does not maintain a formal approved-vendor list for 245D training. Completing a CareCertify course satisfies this handbook's training requirement only where its content actually covers the statutory topic assigned; if you have questions about whether a specific CareCertify course covers a specific legal requirement, ask your supervisor.



HB-04 Electronic Visit Verification (EVV)

REQUIRED BY LAW

Federal law (the 21st Century Cures Act) requires Minnesota to electronically verify certain facts about every Medicaid-funded personal care and home care visit: the type of service, who received it, the date, the location, who provided it, and the time it began and ended. Minnesota's designated statewide EVV data aggregator is HHAeXchange; every EVV system used by a provider, including the Agency's, must ultimately transmit visit data into HHAeXchange.

Using Pavillio

Happy Living Options LLC uses Pavillio as its EVV and agency-management platform. Pavillio captures your visit information and transmits it to HHAeXchange, the state aggregator, to satisfy Minnesota's EVV mandate for the waiver and personal care services the Agency provides.

NOTE: If you have a question about how Pavillio's clock-in/out app works on your specific device, contact your supervisor or the Agency's Pavillio administrator, do not guess at a workaround.

Clocking In and Out

AGENCY POLICY

- Clock in only when you physically arrive at the person's home or authorized service location, and clock out only when you leave, using the Pavillio app or device the Agency has provided or approved.
- Never clock in or out from a location other than where the service is actually being provided, and never clock in or out on behalf of another caregiver.
- If a person's schedule or location changes, update it through the Agency's normal scheduling process, do not simply adjust your EVV entry to match.

If the App Fails

AGENCY POLICY

- If the app will not load, your device has no signal, or the visit otherwise cannot be captured electronically, document the visit manually: start time, end time, services provided, and your signature.
- Submit the manual documentation to your supervisor as soon as possible so the visit can be reconciled in Pavillio, this keeps the Agency's EVV compliance rate accurate for DHS review.

EVV Falsification Is Fraud

REQUIRED BY LAW

NOTE: Clocking in without being present, backdating a visit, or altering EVV times or locations is Medicaid program integrity fraud, not a paperwork shortcut. It is grounds for immediate termination, and may be reported to DHS and referred for civil or criminal investigation.



HB-05 Vulnerable Adult & Child Maltreatment Reporting

REQUIRED BY LAW

As Agency staff, you are a mandated reporter. This means that if you know or have reason to believe a person has been maltreated, you must report it, you do not need proof, and you are not responsible for investigating it yourself. Which law applies, and who you report to, depends on the age of the person.

Vulnerable Adults (18 and Older)

A vulnerable adult is a person 18 or older who meets the definition in Minn. Stat. § 626.5572, subd. 21. Report suspected abuse, neglect, or financial exploitation of a vulnerable adult to the Minnesota Adult Abuse Reporting Center (MAARC):

Contact	Phone	Purpose
MAARC, Minnesota Adult Abuse Reporting Center	1-844-880-1574 (toll-free)	Report suspected abuse, neglect, or financial exploitation of a vulnerable adult (18+)
911	911	Immediate danger to anyone, call first

Minn. Stat. § 626.557, subd. 14; § 626.5572, subd. 21.

Minors (Under 18)

Do not call MAARC to report suspected maltreatment of a minor, MAARC is for vulnerable adults only. Report suspected maltreatment of a child to the county's child protection agency (common entry point) or to law enforcement in the county where the child lives or where the incident occurred.

NOTE: Confirm the current common entry point phone number for the specific county where each minor client lives before this handbook is finalized and distributed, the number differs by county and should be printed here for your staff's quick reference.

Minn. Stat. ch. 260E.

Your Duty Applies No Matter Who You Suspect

NOTE: Your duty to report applies even if the person you suspect is a co-worker, a supervisor, or a client's own parent or family member. Report what you observed, do not investigate or confront the family yourself, and do not wait to be certain, reasonable cause to suspect is enough.

Individual Abuse Prevention Plans (IAPP)

An IAPP is legally required for each vulnerable adult you serve, and separately for any person of any age receiving an intensive support service. As a matter of Agency policy exceeding this legal floor, the Agency completes an IAPP for every person served. Review the IAPP for each person on your caseload and follow its individualized prevention measures.

Minn. Stat. §§ 626.557, subd. 14; 245D.071, subd. 2.



HB-06 Professional Boundaries & Your Relationship With the People You Serve

AGENCY POLICY

NOTE: This section reflects Agency policy, built on top of the Agency's abuse prevention duties (Minn. Stat. § 245A.65) and Minnesota's definition of financial exploitation of a vulnerable adult (Minn. Stat. § 626.5572, subd. 9). Minnesota law does not contain a single standalone "caregiver boundaries" statute, these rules are the Agency's own standard for keeping every relationship safe, professional, and free of conflicts of interest.

General Boundaries

- Do not accept gifts, cash, loans, or any other item of value from a person you serve or their family, and do not lend them money or property.
- Do not allow yourself to be named in a person's will, trust, insurance policy, or as a beneficiary of any kind.
- Never serve as a person's power of attorney, guardian, or conservator while you are their caregiver, and tell your supervisor immediately if you are ever asked to.
- Do not use a person's vehicle, home, or other property for your own personal purposes.
- Provide only the services authorized in the person's support plan; do not take on outside errands, side jobs, or personal favors for a person you serve or their family.

Additional Boundaries When You Serve a Minor

- Do not socialize with the child or their family outside your scheduled, authorized work hours.
- Do not give the child or the parent/guardian your personal cell number, personal social media, or home address; use only Agency-approved communication channels.
- Never transport a minor anywhere beyond what the support plan authorizes and the parent or legal guardian has approved in writing.
- Never photograph or video a minor client, or post about them on personal social media, even with a parent's informal permission, without specific Agency authorization.
- Maintain a professional relationship with the child's parent or legal guardian; a personal friendship or romantic relationship with a client's family member is not permitted while you are assigned to that case.

NOTE: Your mandated reporting duty applies even if the person you suspect of maltreatment is the child's own parent or guardian. Report to the county child protection agency or law enforcement, do not handle it internally with the family.



HB-07 Drug and Alcohol Policy

REQUIRED BY LAW

Minnesota's Drug and Alcohol Testing in the Workplace Act (Minn. Stat. §§ 181.950 to .957) allows employers to test employees and applicants for drugs and alcohol under a written policy that meets specific legal requirements. This section is that written policy.

Positions Covered

Because caregiver positions provide face-to-face care to children, vulnerable adults, and patients receiving health care services, they fall within a specific legal category under Minn. Stat. § 181.951, subd. 9, that permits testing, including cannabis testing, for these positions. This applies notwithstanding Minnesota's legalization of adult-use cannabis and the general off-duty-conduct protections of Minn. Stat. § 181.938, which do not extend to this category of direct-care position.

Testing the Agency May Conduct

- Pre-employment testing, after a conditional job offer has been made, applied the same way to every applicant for the position.
- Reasonable suspicion testing, when a supervisor has specific, documented observations suggesting impairment.
- Post-accident testing, following a workplace accident or injury.
- Random testing, because caregiver positions are covered direct-care positions under this policy.
- Return-to-duty and follow-up testing, for staff returning from a treatment program, for up to two years after.

Notice

Current employees receive at least two weeks' written notice before being subject to random or other scheduled testing under this policy. This policy is posted at the Agency and provided to every employee.

Minn. Stat. § 181.951, subds. 2, 3, 9.

Your Rights

- You will receive written notice of a positive test result within three working days.
- You have the right to explain a positive result (for example, a prescription medication) or to request a confirmatory retest at your own expense, within three working days of notice.
- The Agency will not discharge you for a first confirmed positive test without first offering you the opportunity to participate in a counseling or rehabilitation program; the Agency may temporarily suspend you from direct-care duties while a positive result is being confirmed.
- Test results are kept confidential and are not shared except as permitted by law.

Minn. Stat. §§ 181.953, 181.954.

On-Duty Impairment

Regardless of testing, you may never be impaired by alcohol, cannabis, or any other substance while on duty, on call, or otherwise responsible for a person served. Impairment while responsible for a person served results in immediate removal from direct-care duties and may result in termination.



HB-08 Earned Sick and Safe Time (ESST)

REQUIRED BY LAW

Minnesota's Earned Sick and Safe Time law (Minn. Stat. §§ 181.9445 to .9448) requires nearly every Minnesota employer, including home care agencies, to provide paid sick and safe time to employees who work at least 80 hours a year in Minnesota.

How ESST Works

- You earn 1 hour of ESST for every 30 hours you work, up to 48 hours in a year.
- Unused ESST carries over up to a balance of 80 hours, or the Agency may instead provide your full annual amount upfront at the start of the year (frontloading), your supervisor will tell you which method the Agency uses.
- You may use ESST for your own or a family member's illness, injury, or medical care; for safety time related to domestic abuse, sexual assault, or stalking; for a workplace closure due to weather or a public health emergency; or for your child's school or care program closing.
- "Family member" is defined broadly under this law, it includes children, spouses or domestic partners, siblings, parents, grandparents, in-laws, other blood relatives, and one additional person you may designate each year.
- Give your supervisor as much notice as reasonably possible when you need to use ESST; the Agency may ask for documentation if you miss more than two consecutive scheduled shifts.
- The Agency will never retaliate against you for using ESST you are entitled to.

Minn. Stat. §§ 181.9445 to 181.9448.

NOTE: The City of Minneapolis also has its own Sick and Safe Time Ordinance (Minneapolis Code of Ordinances, Title 2, Chapter 40), separately enforced by the Minneapolis Department of Civil Rights. Current city guidance states the ordinance now aligns with, and does not exceed, the state law described above, but a Minneapolis employee may also raise a complaint with the city under this ordinance.



HB-09 Minnesota Paid Leave (Paid Family & Medical Leave)

REQUIRED BY LAW

Minnesota Paid Leave (Minn. Stat. ch. 268B), administered by the Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED), has provided paid family and medical leave benefits since January 1, 2026. Nearly every Minnesota employer, including the Agency, participates, either through the state plan or an approved private plan.

What It Covers

- Your own serious health condition, including pregnancy.
- Bonding with a new child, within 12 months of birth, adoption, or placement.
- Caring for a family member with a serious health condition.
- A military family member's active-duty exigency.
- Safety leave related to domestic abuse, sexual assault, or stalking.

Each category is capped at 12 weeks, and combined benefits in a 12-month benefit year are capped at 20 weeks.

Minn. Stat. § 268B.04.

How It's Funded

Paid Leave is funded through a payroll premium split between the Agency and employees, at least half paid by the Agency. The statutory base rate is 0.7% of wages, though the legislature has adjusted the actual rate applied in recent years, and small employers that qualify may receive a reduced rate.

NOTE: Confirm the current premium rate and the Agency's exact employer/employee split at pl.mn.gov before finalizing payroll deductions, the legislature has changed this rate for 2026 and 2027, and this handbook states only the statutory baseline.

Job Protection & Notice

- You do not need to wait to use Paid Leave, benefits are available from your first day of qualifying leave.
- After 90 days of employment, you have the right to return to your same or an equivalent position, pay, and benefits after Paid Leave.
- The Agency will never retaliate against you for using Paid Leave you are entitled to.
- Paid Leave runs at the same time as (concurrently with) FMLA leave where a leave reason qualifies under both; it is separate from ESST, you are not required to use up your ESST before using Paid Leave.

Minn. Stat. § 268B.09.



HB-10 Restrictive Interventions & Emergency Use of Manual Restraint

REQUIRED BY LAW

Minnesota law strictly limits when any restrictive intervention, including manual restraint, may be used on a person served. The only lawful way to plan for a restrictive intervention is through a Positive Support Transition Plan, using state-prescribed forms and a mandatory phase-out timeline. Simply writing a "safety intervention" into a person's support plan does not by itself authorize any restrictive intervention.

- You may never use manual restraint or any other restrictive intervention except in the narrow emergency circumstances defined in the Agency's Emergency Use of Manual Restraint policy (HLO-SAF-01) in the Complete Program Policy Manual.
- If you are ever involved in an emergency use of manual restraint, report it to your supervisor immediately, before the end of your shift, so the required review and reporting timelines can be met.
- If a licensed health or mental health professional has determined manual restraint is medically or psychologically contraindicated for a specific person, you may never use it on that person under any circumstance.

Minn. Stat. § 245D.06.



HB-11 Health, Safety, and Emergency Procedures

First Aid & CPR

REQUIRED BY LAW

Minnesota law requires you to maintain current basic first aid training. CPR is separately required by law only when it is written into a specific person's support plan or support plan addendum, it is not a blanket legal requirement for every caregiver.

AGENCY POLICY

As Agency policy exceeding this legal floor, the Agency requires all caregivers to maintain current CPR certification regardless of whether a specific person's plan requires it, so that every caregiver can respond to an emergency.

Minn. Stat. § 245D.06, subd. 2.

Incident Reporting

Report any injury, illness, medication error, environmental hazard, or other reportable incident to your supervisor immediately, and no later than 24 hours after you become aware of it, following the Agency's Responding to and Reporting Incidents policy (HLO-RPT-03).



HB-12 Confidentiality & Data Privacy

REQUIRED BY LAW

You will learn private information about the people you serve, including health information, in the course of your work. You must keep this information confidential and share it only with people who are authorized to receive it as part of that person's care.

- Do not discuss a person's health, behavior, finances, or personal circumstances with anyone who is not authorized to know it, including your own family and friends, or on social media.
- Store and dispose of any paper or electronic records containing a person's information securely, following the Agency's Data Privacy policy (HLO-COM-01).

NOTE: Whether HIPAA specifically applies to the Agency depends on whether the Agency is a HIPAA covered entity for the services it bills, this is addressed in the Agency's HIPAA Notice of Privacy Practices and the Complete Program Policy Manual. Your duty of confidentiality to the people you serve applies either way.



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HB-13 Raising a Concern

If you have a concern about your job, a policy, a coworker, or anything covered in this handbook, raise it with your supervisor first. If you are not comfortable doing that, or the concern involves your supervisor, contact:

Contact	Phone	Purpose
Moulid Ahmed	763-388-6961	Program Manager, highest level of authority at the Agency

Mailing address: 2200 E Franklin Ave #205, Minneapolis, MN 55404. This is separate from, and in addition to, the grievance process available to the people the Agency serves, described in the Agency's Grievances policy (HLO-OPS-07).

NOTE: Minnesota law protects employees from retaliation for good-faith reports of suspected violations of law (Minn. Stat. § 181.932). The Agency does not retaliate against staff for raising concerns in good faith, including mandated-reporter obligations under HB-05.



HB-14 Acknowledgment of Receipt

By signing below, I acknowledge that I have received, reviewed, and had the opportunity to ask questions about this Caregiver Staff Handbook. I understand that it summarizes legal requirements and Agency policies that apply to my work, that it may be updated as laws change, and that I am responsible for following the most current version.

Employee Name (print):

Employee ID / Position: _____

Employee Signature

Date

Received By (Supervisor / Program Manager)

Date