



**Meals on Wheels**  
Tasmania

# Volunteer Handbook

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## HISTORY AND STRUCTURE

### Brief History

- Meals on Wheels Tasmania started in 1955 with one car delivering to a small number of elderly/sick clients in Hobart.
- In 1963, a second branch was formed at Glenorchy with meals provided by volunteers using a small kitchen provided by the local council
- The meals on Wheels Association of Tasmania was established in 1971 with 8 branches formed around the state.
- Meals on Wheels Tasmania now has branches extending from Smithton in the North West to Dover in the South and delivers approximately 180,000 meals a year.
- There are over 750 volunteers currently involved with the delivery of meals
- Volunteers are the back bone of the organisation and we couldn't provide our service without them

## Structure

➤ MOW has a **Board of Management** which meets once a month on the third Tuesday. It is made up of 9 community volunteers with particular skills relevant to the organisation.

➤ The **State Office** is located at 103A Grove Road. It is responsible for the organisation's budget, supplier contracts, insurances, statistics, reporting to government funders, communication media, website, resources etc.

The staff is made up of:

- General Manager
- Manager of Business and Finance
- Regional Manager South
- Regional Manager North
- Administration Officer
- Administration Assistant

➤ BRANCH COORDINATORS

➤ PAID STAFF & VOLUNTEERS

## COMMUNICATION

MOW publishes a regular newsletter to keep staff, volunteers and clients informed. Hard copies will be available at your branch and a soft copy can be downloaded from our website [www.mowtas.org.au](http://www.mowtas.org.au). We can send the newsletter to your email address. Just send an email to [office@mowtas.org.au](mailto:office@mowtas.org.au) to register your address.

You can also keep in touch through our Facebook page. Go to: <https://facebook.com/MealsOnWheelsTasmania>.

### Welcome

Welcome to Meals on Wheels Tasmania. We hope your time with us is positive and rewarding. The contribution you are making is highly valued.

This handbook contains the information for you to get started with MOW. Please take time to read it and please ask questions if anything is unclear.

MOW is funded by the Commonwealth Department of Health under the Commonwealth Home Support Program (CHSP) and the Tasmanian Department of Social Services. MOW supports people of all ages and/or disability who cannot prepare a meal for themselves but wish to remain independent in their own homes.

MOW volunteers play a vital role in:

- Ensuring that nutritional food is provided
- Providing social contact
- Monitoring the health and wellbeing of its clients

A National Police Check (renewable every 3 years and done at MOW expense) and details about your vehicle will be required before you start.

If you have ever worked and/or lived overseas, a Statutory Declaration stating you have never been charged with or accused of, a crime, will also be necessary.

Your information will be secured in a locked filing cabinet and/or on a secure electronic database.

When you apply to be a volunteer, your Branch Coordinator will find out which days you are available – once a week, once a fortnight or once a month. Please inform your coordinator ASAP if you are unavailable on your rostered day.

Your Branch Coordinator is available to assist you and answer any questions you may have. You can also contact the State Office on 1800 696 325

Your Branch is:

Address:

Coordinator's name

Your rostered days are:

Commencement date:

## Rights and Responsibilities

As a volunteer you have the RIGHT to:

- Be treated with respect and not bullied, harassed or discriminated against.
- Work in a healthy and safe environment
- Be assured that your personal information will be kept confidential
- Be reimbursed for any out-of-pocket expenses, where appropriate
- Know that MOW has Grievance and Conflict Resolution policies
- Have any complaints or concerns addressed promptly and fairly
- Be adequately covered by insurance

As a volunteer you have the RESPONSIBILITY to:

- Be punctual and reliable
- To notify your coordinator if you are unavailable or running late
- Not judge clients, staff or volunteers in any way
- Respect confidentiality unless the safety of a client or others is at risk

- Give feedback – communicating relevant and important information
- Understand that clients have a right to complain about the service
- Accept and abide by decisions made by staff, committees, State office and the Board of MOW.

## **DUTY OF CARE**

Duty of Care refers to a legal obligation to avoid causing harm to another person – exercising reasonable care to prevent a person being harmed by an accident or omission. Health and aged care service providers, including MOW volunteers and staff, have a duty of care to the people they service and those they work with.

## **Elder abuse**

It is important for MOW staff and volunteers to be alert to the possibility of a client being neglected or abused, financially, physically, sexually, psychologically, emotionally or socially. Any suspicion should be reported to your branch coordinator or to the State Office General Manager.

We refer you to the MOW policy on Elder Abuse.



## IMPORTANT POINTS TO REMEMBER

- Delivery instructions will be given to you on a run sheet with information about any special dietary needs of the client and special instructions such as: “deliver to the back door”
- Check the number of meals in your eski against the number required according to the run sheet
- Record your departure time on the run sheet
- Always provide a receipt for any money received
- Please advise your coordinator if:
  - a. There are any changes to the client’s requirements
  - b. If you suspect a client is not well or is being abused or just not coping
  - c. You have any concerns about the safety of the client’s property such as broken steps, fire hazards, slippery surfaces etc.
  - d. The client did not appear to be at home or did not answer the door.
  - e. Any money that was collected or not paid when it should have been

## VEHICLE INFORMATION

### PETROL ALLOWANCE

Most Meals on Wheels branches offer their volunteer drivers a small amount of money towards the cost of their petrol.

Some volunteers choose to donate this amount back to MOW.

Donations over \$2.00 to the Meals on Wheels Association of Tasmania are tax deductible. A receipt from MOW is necessary for you to claim this on your tax return.

### INSURANCE

#### Personal Accident

Volunteers are covered for personal injury incurred while delivering meals. If hospital admission is necessary as a result of the accident it needs to be as a public patient. Our cover will not compensate for any excess or gap payment by the volunteer under Medicare or private health cover.

#### Motor Vehicle

Car insurance is the owner's responsibility. Any vehicle used on MOW business should have full comprehensive insurance cover. An accident that occurs while travelling to or from the pickup point or while delivering meals, your No Claim bonus and any excess will be covered by the Association's policy.

**All accidents should be reported immediately to your MOW Coordinator who can then assist with completing an accident/incident form**

## WORKPLACE HEALTH AND SAFETY

Mow is committed to providing a safe and positive working environment for all staff and volunteers. The well-being of those involved in the service is essential for them to carry out their duties. Under the WHS legislation:

- Volunteers and employees have a duty to take reasonable care to protect their own health and safety and the health & safety of others
- Volunteers and employees are to cooperate to ensure that the workplace is a safe environment
- Any situation that could be a risk or a hazard is to be reported ASAP verbally and in an incident report
- Volunteers and staff are to follow instructions and training provided by MOW, use the protective equipment and comply with all health and safety procedures.

### Lifting & carrying

Lifting and carrying are basic tasks for volunteers and following the right procedures will help to avoid injury. Only lift items you feel you can manage safely and use the crouch and lift method when you can. Reduce large loads to smaller ones where possible, use a trolley or seek help from your coordinator.

## **Drugs & Alcohol**

MOW is a drugs and alcohol free environment for its volunteers and staff. Volunteers should always wash their hands after smoking and be aware that the smell of tobacco remains on clothing and can be smelled by others.

## **High Visibility Vests**

All volunteers who deliver meals in a MOW or private vehicle are to wear the Meals on Wheels high visibility vests with the MOW logo on the front. These are a form of identification as well as a WHS requirement

## **ENTERING A CLIENT'S HOME**

Before entering a client's home, all volunteers should:

- Knock or ring the doorbell
- Call out a greeting and identify that you are from MOW
- Allow time for a response and permission to enter is given
- If there is no response, contact your branch coordinator

Any situation with a client that causes concern should be reported immediately.

## EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

Emergency situations are not common but volunteers need to be aware of the procedure should one arise.

**If you find a client unconscious, seriously ill or in distress the recommended procedure is:**

- ❖ RING 131444
- ❖ Ask the operator for Ambulance
- ❖ Give the operator your name, the exact address and state the problem
- ❖ Follow the Operator's instructions
- ❖ Ring your MOW Coordinator so they can make arrangements for the completion of your run
- ❖ Wait for the ambulance
- ❖ If the person is deceased, phone the Police on 131444
- ❖ Ask your helper (if you have one) to stay with the client until the ambulance arrives
- ❖ Continue with your deliveries ONLY if you feel able to do so and with the OK from your Coordinator

## Emergency situations in other locations

If you are in another location – e.g. aged care facility, supplier’s kitchen, disability organisation etc. you **MUST** follow the emergency procedures of that organisation without question.

### YOUR SAFETY

To maintain your personal safety when visiting clients in their homes you should take the following actions:

- Park your vehicle where it cannot be blocked in by another vehicle e.g. the driveway
- If you are in a no through road or a cul-de-sac, park your car facing the exit route
- Check the premises – looking for any possible hazards e.g. dogs. If a threatening dog appears, face the dog and leave the property by slowly walking backwards
- Keep your keys within easy reach - in a pocket or keep them in your hand
- Is it necessary to enter the home or can you deliver at the door?
- Don’t enter the client’s home until invited
- Don’t assist with any personal care tasks

- If you encounter a risky situation inside the home at any time you should leave immediately
- Don't hesitate to ask for police assistance and call 000
- Don't attempt to lift or move clients
- **Never administer medication to clients**

If you don't feel safe, do not deliver the meal and report to your coordinator. Together you can:

- Identify the risk
- Assess the risk
- Control or eliminate the risk
- Review the controls to check they are effective

### **Fitness for work**

Being fit for work means being in a physical and mental state which enables you to work safely. Your fitness can be affected by physical or mental illness, injury, stress, grief, medication and fatigue. If the impact of any of these is likely to put you or others at risk then don't come to work and seek professional advice as soon as possible. MOW will do all it can to support staff and volunteers in these situations.

- Do not handle needles or any sharp instruments in a client's home
- Any contact with the above should be reported IMMEDIATELY to your coordinator

## DEMENTIA

With the increasing incidence of dementia in the ageing population, all MOW staff and volunteers need to be aware of the techniques to communicate with a client with dementia effectively.

- Establish eye contact before talking to the client
- Approach slowly and quietly from the front
- Communicate at the same level ie sit if they are sitting
- Call the person by name then say your name and why you are there
- Use short, simple sentences, speaking calmly, slowly and clearly
- Ask simple, short questions that require a "Yes" or "No" answer
- Allow time for the client to understand
- Ask the client if you can turn off the TV or radio to avoid distractions
- Use hand gestures to back up what you are saying
- Be aware of the client's body language – is it welcoming or defensive?



- Be aware of your own body language – is it open and friendly?
- Use humour if it is appropriate
- Use touch if it is appropriate. Ask if it's OK to touch the client.
- Divert the conversation if it becomes confronting, frustrating or tense for the client

### **DO NOT**

- **Argue**
- **Give orders**
- **Be condescending**
- **Ask intrusive questions**
- **Give choices. This can be confusing for clients.**

### **Unsafe Clients**

The potential for violent or challenging behaviour is assessed when a client is accepted but safety may change in circumstances such as mental illness, head injury, alcohol or drug dependence, anxiety, stress etc. Again, if you don't feel safe – leave - and report to your coordinator.

## FOOD SAFETY

MOW Tasmania sources its meals from Strathhaven and Strathdevon and some other providers. These providers comply with the National Food Safety Standards. When MOW takes delivery of the meals the service assumes responsibility for the safety of those meals.

It is essential that everyone involved in the delivery of meals understands the importance of food safety regulations and the need to maintain standards.

## HYGIENE

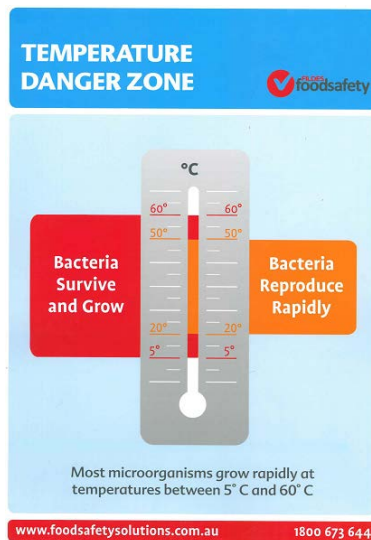
Normal hygiene practices should be followed before and after the delivery of meals

### Hand washing

1. Wet hands with warm, running water
  2. Squirt soap into palm of hand
  3. Rub hands together with soap to make a lather
  4. Rub back of hands and fingers, in between fingers, around thumbs, fingertips and nails
  5. Rinse hands in warm, running water
  6. DRY hands thoroughly with a clean, dry towel, preferably disposable paper towel.
- Do not touch any blood or other bodily fluids at any time
  - Any cuts, skin lesions or abrasions you have **MUST BE COVERED**

## Temperature Control

- Temperature control is a vital factor in maintaining food safety.
- It is critical that the lids of the eskis be firmly shut at all times
- Gel and freezer packs are left in the eski until the delivery run is complete as they help maintain the temperature of the meals at a safe level
- The meal must remain unopened and under temperature control at all times during transportation
- The temperature of the meals will be tested from time to time by Environmental Health Inspectors
- The lids of the main course meals carry instructions on the storage and reheating of food
- Use-by dates are also part of the MOW duty of care to clients



## PROCEDURE IF SOMEONE IS NOT AT HOME

- Check that everything appears to be in order and notify your coordinator.
- If an eski/cooler bag containing at least one freezer brick has been left out then place the meal in this.
- Only the above is considered a safe container in which to leave a chilled meal
- If there is no eski/cooler bag then the meal must be returned to your coordinator.
- If a meal is still there from the previous day, **DO NOT** leave another meal and inform your coordinator.
- Food stored above 5 degrees for a chilled meal and above 60 degrees for a hot meal will allow harmful bacteria to multiply which could seriously compromise the client's health.
- ***Any meals left in an eski/cooler bag must be labelled with a WHITE STICKER as shown below and marked with the date and time of delivery.***



Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Time: \_\_\_\_\_

This meal should either be eaten or refrigerated within 2 hours of delivery, otherwise please discard as spoilage may have occurred

## Health requirements

MOW clients are made up of vulnerable persons who are more susceptible to food poisoning so all measures are to be taken to minimise the risk.

Any food handler with symptoms or a diagnosis of an illness (such as vomiting, diarrhoea or fever) must:

- Inform their MOW Coordinator/Manager that they are ill
- Not handle any food or containers if it reasonable likely that the illness could be passed on

## PRIVACY AND CONFIDENTIALITY

- Volunteers need to maintain strict privacy and confidentiality in relation to their MOW involvement.
- Client's living conditions and personal circumstances should not be discussed with anyone in the community or with the volunteer's family or friends.
- Privacy and confidentiality applies to clients who may have an infectious condition such as Hepatitis or HIV.
- You do not have to deliver to a client if you have concerns about your health and safety.
- Any concerns should be discussed confidentially with your MOW coordinator or State office staff.
- The privilege to enter a client's home should be acknowledged and respected
- The trust and confidence of clients adds to the quality of the MOW service.

## **COUNSELLING**

Meals on Wheels volunteers may experience a distressing situation at some time such the death of a client and this can cause distress and grief.

Free counselling is available if you contact your branch coordinator or the State office.

## **COMPLAINTS & COMPLIMENTS**

All clients are encouraged to comment on our service and on the meals they receive. This will happen informally or through a more official client survey. ALL comments and complaints should be recorded on a feedback form and given to your coordinator or to the State Office. Recording these is part of the requirements for the accreditation of MOW.

## HELPFUL TIPS

- Don't discuss clients, staff or other volunteers with anyone. Confidential information about client and volunteers should only be raised with your coordinator, Regional Manager or the State Office.
- Don't discuss your personal problems or disclose your personal details to clients. This includes phone numbers.
- Don't put yourself at risk and remember you are only covered by MOW to do approved work at approved times
- Don't accept money (except payment for meals) or gifts from clients as this can lead to misunderstandings. Children should not accept money under any circumstances
- Don't enter a home if you suspect there is a risk to your health and safety. Discuss with your coordinator and complete a Risk/Hazard form.
- Don't break into a client's home regardless of your concerns or suspicions. Report these to the police and tell your coordinator

## DELIVERING ON HOT DAYS

Be aware that strong sunlight and extremely hot temperatures can be dangerous to your health. Extreme heat can put everyone at risk from heat illness and may increase your health risks if you have breathing difficulties, heart or kidney problems, hypertension or other illnesses.

- Dress for the weather: wear loose-fitting, light coloured clothing made from breathable fabric.
- Stay hydrated: drink plenty of cool liquids, especially water, before you feel thirsty to decrease your risk of dehydration.
- 
- Avoid sun exposure: wear a wide-brimmed, breathable hat.
- Wear sunglasses: make sure they provide protection against UVA and UVB rays.
- 
- Limit your time in sun: especially between 11:00am and 4:00pm.
- Use sunscreen: with a Sun Protection Factor of 50 plus. Remember sunscreen will protect against the sun's UV Rays, but not from the heat.



## GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE

- Step 1. Approach the person (not clients) with whom you have an issue and discuss  
The situation
- Step 2. Make a time to talk to your Branch Coordinator or Regional Manager and confidentially discuss how best to resolve the issue
- Step 3. If unresolved then raise the issue with the MOW General Manager
- Step 4. If still unresolved then approach a member of the Board of Management. The outcome of this will be discussed with you ASAP.

## VOLUNTEER DISMISSAL

In instances of misconduct or failure to undertake the volunteers' responsibilities, the General Manager of MOW Tasmania has the right to dismiss the volunteer. Grounds for dismissal may include:

- Theft of property or money
- Intoxication through alcohol or other drug – legal or illegal
- Verbal or physical harassment or bullying of any other volunteer, staff member or client
- Disclosure of confidential information other than that necessary for the safety of clients
- Failure to carry out the role of volunteer as documented in the position description



**Meals on Wheels**  
Tasmania

If you are unsure about anything or need further help

**PLEASE RING**  
**1800 696 325**



# THIS HANDBOOK IS AVAILABLE IN LARGE PRINT