



Managing Potential Driver Impairment Procedure

Procedure Number

CHC-MHS-0074

Version Nos:

1

1. Purpose

This Procedure provides guidance to West Coast District Health Board (WCDHB) Mental Health Service (MHS) staff dealing with intoxicated or drug affected clients who are intending to drive, and covers advice to clients regarding potentially impaired driving, and our responsibilities under the Land Transport Act.

2. Application

This Procedure is to be followed by all staff of the WCDHB MHS.

3. Definitions

For the purpose of this Procedure:

NZTA – New Zealand Transport Agency (formerly the Land Transport Safety Authority)

DAMHS – Director of Area Mental Health Services

4. Responsibilities

For the purposes of this Procedure:

All **WCDHB MHS staff** are responsible for following the process outlined below, if a person appears to be intoxicated or drug affected and is intending to drive, taking note of safety precautions.

Medical Practitioners are responsible for ensuring clear information and guidance is given to clients prescribed medication likely to impair driving. They are also responsible under s18 of Land Transport Act to report to NZ Transport Agency (NZTA) any ongoing concerns regarding a client's capacity to drive.

WCDHB MHS Clinical staff are responsible for giving information to clients regarding the implications of driving while impaired where this is an issue, and for raising any concerns in a clinical team meeting.

The '**person in charge of the hospital**' (WCDHB MHS Operational Manager or designate) is required to notify the NZTA whenever a licensed driver is hospitalised under s30 MH Act, and to ensure that the person's license is forwarded to the DAMHS in a timely fashion.

5. Resources Required

This Procedure requires the following resources:

- WCDHB MHS Prescription Medication and Driving Information Sheet



Managing Potential Driver Impairment Procedure

Procedure Number
CHC-MHS-0074

Version Nos:
1

6. Process

- 1.00 Where a person appears to be under the influence of any substances (including prescription medication) and intends to drive while impaired, WCDHB MHS staff will:
- Express concern and advise person not to drive; and
 - Suggest alternatives, such as:
 - Leave keys with Reception for safe keeping, and collect vehicle when not impaired
 - Leave keys and arrange for someone else to collect vehicle
 - Offer to assist person with alternative mode of transport (e.g. arrange for a friend to collect, order a taxi, arrange ride home)

Note: staff will not move the vehicle under any circumstance – if the vehicle poses a hazard, inform the Police.

- 1.01 Where the person refuses to leave keys and/or arrange alternatives, WCDHB MHS staff will:
- Reiterate concerns for person's safety and that of others; and
 - Inform that person that the Police will be informed if the person drives their vehicle.

- 1.02 Where the person ignore advice and drives away WCDHB MHS staff will:
- Record vehicle registration; and
 - Phone police and advise of concern; and
 - Document advice given and subsequent actions in clinical notes, and inform case manager of same

Note: Case Manager or other involved staff to ensure that any such situations are discussed and reviewed at next clinical team meeting.

- 1.03 Where medication is prescribed or found to be abused, which may impair driving ability, the prescribing clinician will provide information and advise the person not to drive or operate heavy machinery if/while impaired, and will document this clearly in the clinical notes.

- 1.04 Where a person to known to use alcohol and/or other substances to the extent that it may impair driving, clinicians involved will provide relevant information and advice, and document this clearly in the clinical notes. Information documented is to include:
- Potential impact of medication on ability to drive
 - The Land Transport Act

Note: A standard template is available to provide written advice

Information should be given regardless of whether or not the client has a driver license or states they are a driver

- 1.05 Where the client wishes to address issues around impaired driving the WCDHB MHS clinical team will provide support, which may include:
- Referral to appropriate service providers
 - Exploring long term medication options
 - Exploring interim alternative transport options
 - Ongoing reviews and support



Managing Potential Driver Impairment Procedure

Procedure Number

CHC-MHS-0074

Version Nos:

1

- 1.06 Where the Medical Practitioner has concerns and believes the person is not addressing issues and continues to drive while impaired, the NZ Transport Agency is to be informed in writing by the Registered Medical Practitioner. A standard template for this is provided by the NZTA.
- 1.07 Once issues around impairment have been addressed a driver license may be restored if a supporting letter from the same doctor, who originally notified them, is received by NZTA.
- 1.08 Staff are to assess the situation with a view to their own safety and act accordingly as intervening may trigger negative emotion. Actions may include:
- Having another staff member or family member present
 - Informing or liaising with clinical manager or senior staff person
 - Deciding how to inform the individual that the matter will be reported to the Police and/or the NZTA. Consider if, when and by whom the individual will be informed.
- 1.09 Procedures for managing problematic use of alcohol and/or other drugs that may impair driving ability are clearly laid out in the Rata AOD Service Provision Framework, including NZTA assessment procedures, drug screening during Opioid Substitution Treatment, and reporting to the NZTA. AOD Service staff will manage this procedure for clients of their service.

7. Precautions And Considerations

- ➔ Where a person appears to be under the influence of any substances (including prescription medication) and intends to drive while impaired, WCDHB MHS staff are required to take appropriate action to minimise risk associated with this
- ➔ Staff are to assess the situation with a view to their own safety and act accordingly
- ➔ Procedures for managing problematic use of alcohol and/or other drugs that may impair driving ability are clearly laid out in the Rata AOD Service Provision Framework

8. References

- Rata AOD Notification to LTSA Procedure – Service Provision Framework
- CDHB AOD Service Policy for Reporting to LTSA; and Policy Regarding Cannabis and Reporting to LTSA
- The Land Transport Act 1998 – Sections 11A, 12, 18 and 19
- Medical Aspects of Fitness to Drive- a guide for medical practitioners (Land Transport Safety Authority) – now NZ Transport Agency.
- Health Practitioner’s Competence Assurance Act 2003

9. Related Documents

WCDHB MHS Prescription Medication and Driving Information Sheet

Version:

1



Managing Potential Driver Impairment Procedure

Procedure Number
CHC-MHS-0074

Version Nos:
1

Revision History	Developed By:	Mental Health QI Co-Ordinator
	Authorised By:	MHS Clinical Governance
	Date Authorised:	February 2010
	Date Last Reviewed:	February 2010
	Date Of Next Review:	February 2012