

Van Driving Policy

Safe, responsible use of Don't Forget My Pet Foundation vehicles

Applies to	All DFMP staff and volunteers who drive a Foundation vehicle
Approved by	CEO
Effective date	19 August 2026
Review date	19 August 2027
Related documents	Volunteer Agreement, WHS Policy, Code of Conduct, Vehicle Incident Report Form

You Are Representing DFMP

Whenever you drive a DFMP vehicle — whether on a support visit, a pet food collection or distribution run, or at a promotional or community event — you are a visible representative of the Foundation. The van carries our name and logo, and your conduct, presentation, and driving reflect directly on Don't Forget My Pet. Drivers are expected to behave professionally and courteously at all times: this includes safe and considerate driving, respectful interactions with the public, clients, and other road users, and presenting the vehicle and yourself in a way that reflects well on the organisation.

1. Purpose

This policy sets out the standards all drivers must follow when operating a Don't Forget My Pet Foundation (DFMP) vehicle. It exists to protect the people who drive and travel in our vans, the animals in our care, other road users, and the Foundation's vehicles and reputation.

2. Scope

This policy applies to every staff member and volunteer who drives a DFMP-owned, leased, or hired vehicle for Foundation business, regardless of how often they drive or how short the trip. It applies whenever the vehicle is in use for DFMP purposes, including transporting animals, supplies, or people, pet food collection and distribution runs, promotional and community events, and travelling to and from appointments.

3. Driver Eligibility

Before driving a DFMP vehicle, a person must:

- Hold a current, valid Australian driver's licence appropriate to the vehicle being driven
- Have their licence sighted and a copy recorded on file by the Volunteer Coordinator or line manager before their first drive
- Immediately notify DFMP if their licence is suspended, cancelled, or restricted (e.g. demerit points, medical condition, court order)
- Be at least 21 years of age and have held a full (non-probationary) licence for at least 12 months, unless an exception is approved in writing by the CEO

- Complete a vehicle familiarisation/induction with an authorised person before driving unsupervised
- DFMP reserves the right to request a Victorian driving history check (VicRoads) for insurance purposes.

4. Drug and Alcohol Policy

- **Zero tolerance:** no driver may operate a DFMP vehicle with any detectable level of alcohol or illicit drugs in their system.
- Drivers must not consume alcohol or illicit drugs at any time before or during a shift that includes driving
- If taking prescription or over-the-counter medication that may cause drowsiness or impairment (check the label for driving warnings), the driver must tell their supervisor and must not drive if affected
- Anyone reasonably suspected of being under the influence must not drive, and must inform their supervisor immediately
- A driver who suspects a colleague is impaired must remove them from driving duties and notify the Volunteer Coordinator or line manager
- Breach of this section may result in suspension of driving privileges and, for volunteers, review of their placement, or for staff, disciplinary action up to termination

5. Fatigue Management

Fatigue affects reaction time and judgement in the same way as alcohol. Drivers must:

- Only drive if well rested and alert
- Take a minimum 15-minute break after 2 hours of continuous driving on longer trips (e.g. Ballarat routes)
- Not drive more than 8 hours of DFMP driving duties in a single day without a substantial break
- Stop driving and contact their supervisor if they feel drowsy, lose concentration, or experience micro-sleeps — never "push through" fatigue
- Tell their supervisor before a shift if they have had a poor night's sleep, are unwell, or are otherwise not fit to drive safely, so the run can be reassigned

6. Fitness for Work

Drivers are responsible for presenting fit for duty. A driver must not drive a DFMP vehicle if they are:

- Affected by alcohol, illicit drugs, or impairing medication (see Section 4)
- Fatigued or unwell in a way that could affect safe driving (see Section 5)
- Experiencing an acute physical or mental health episode that could affect concentration or reaction time
- Currently subject to a medical condition or treatment that a doctor has advised affects driving

Anyone unsure whether they are fit to drive should speak with their supervisor before setting out. There is no penalty for raising a genuine fitness-for-work concern — a delayed or reassigned run is always preferable to an unsafe one.

7. Mobile Phone Use

- **Mobile phones must not be used while the vehicle is moving**, in line with Victorian road rules and this policy.
- No handheld or handsfree calls, texting, or app use while driving
- Navigation apps must be set up before departure or by a passenger, not by the driver while moving

- If a call or message must be sent or received, pull over safely and park before using the phone
- Fully mounted, voice-activated navigation is permitted only if set up before the vehicle moves

8. Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

Drivers and passengers must use appropriate PPE for the task, including:

- Enclosed, non-slip footwear at all times when driving or loading/unloading
- Gloves when handling animals, animal waste, cleaning products, or loading heavy or awkward items
- Hi-vis clothing/vest must be worn at all times while driving or operating the van, not just when loading or unloading
- Appropriate restraint/handling equipment (leads, carriers, crates) when transporting animals, to protect both the animal and the driver
- Any PPE specified for a particular client visit (e.g. as advised by a care team) must also be worn

9. Vehicle Security

To protect the vehicle, its contents, and any animals being transported:

- The van must be locked any time it is unattended, even for a brief stop
- Keys must never be left in the ignition or hidden on/around the vehicle
- Animals must never be left unattended in the van, particularly in hot weather — even briefly
- Valuables, equipment, and animal supplies should be stored out of sight when the van is parked
- Any theft, break-in, or attempted break-in must be reported to the Volunteer Coordinator or line manager and, where appropriate, to Police as soon as possible

10. Vehicle Log Completion

Every driver must complete the vehicle log for each trip, recording:

- Driver name and date
- Odometer reading at start and end of trip
- Purpose of trip / clients or locations visited
- Any incidents, near misses, damage, or mechanical issues noticed
- Fuel added (if refuelled) and approximate fuel level on return

The log must be completed at the end of each use, not retrospectively at the end of the week. Logs support fuel and maintenance budgeting, insurance claims, and grant/vehicle-funding acquittals, so accuracy matters.

11. No Eating or Smoking in the Van

- No eating or drinking (other than water) while the vehicle is in motion
- No smoking, vaping, or e-cigarette use in the van at any time, including when parked, in line with Victorian smoke-free vehicle laws and to protect air quality for animals being transported
- Food scraps and general rubbish must be removed from the van at the end of each shift to maintain hygiene, particularly given animals are transported

12. Pre-Drive and Vehicle Care Checks

Before each trip, drivers should complete a quick visual check and report any concerns immediately rather than driving a vehicle they believe is unsafe:

- Tyres (visible damage or obvious under-inflation), lights, indicators, and mirrors
- Windscreen and wipers, and washer fluid level if low
- Warning lights on the dash after start-up
- Enough fuel for the planned trip
- Animal crates/restraints are secure and the load area is clean and free of hazards

13. Animal Transport & Welfare

Because the van's core purpose is supporting people and their pets, animal safety and comfort during transport matters as much as human safety:

- Animals must be appropriately secured in a crate, carrier, or restraint suited to their size and temperament
- Adequate ventilation and a comfortable temperature must be maintained at all times; never leave an animal in a parked van
- Water should be available on longer trips (e.g. Ballarat runs)
- Any sign of an animal being distressed, unwell, or unsafe during transport should prompt the driver to stop in a safe location and assess

14. Incidents, Accidents and Breakdowns

If an accident, breakdown, or incident occurs:

- Prioritise safety — move to a safe location if possible, and check for injuries
- Call 000 if anyone is injured or in immediate danger
- Exchange details with any other party involved and take photos of damage and the scene
- Notify the Volunteer Coordinator or line manager as soon as safely possible, and complete a Vehicle Incident Report
- Do not admit fault or liability at the scene — this is a matter for insurers to determine
- For a breakdown, move the vehicle off the road where possible, use hazard lights, and contact roadside assistance and DFMP

15. General Conduct

- Obey all Victorian road rules, speed limits, and parking restrictions at all times
- Represent DFMP professionally at all times, including at pet food collection/distribution runs and promotional or community events — this includes courteous driving and respectful interactions with the public
- No unauthorised passengers, pets, or personal errands using the DFMP van without prior approval
- Keep the van clean, tidy, and free of personal belongings between shifts
- Report any damage, even minor, as soon as it is noticed — regardless of when or how it occurred
- **Fines and infringements:** any parking or traffic infringement (including speed, red-light, mobile phone, or toll camera fines) incurred while driving a DFMP vehicle is the personal responsibility of the driver who received it and must be paid by that individual, not the Foundation — unless the infringement was caused by a pre-existing vehicle fault DFMP failed to disclose

- **Safety features must not be disabled:** seatbelt alarms, reversing sensors/cameras, speed limiters, lane-assist, and any other factory-fitted safety alarm or feature must never be switched off, muted, disconnected, or overridden for any reason, including to stop a nuisance beep. Report a malfunctioning safety feature to the Volunteer Coordinator or line manager rather than disabling it

16. Responsibilities

- **Drivers** must follow this policy at all times and raise any concerns about fitness to drive, vehicle condition, or safety promptly.
- **Volunteer Coordinator / line manager** is responsible for licence checks, induction, rostering fit and eligible drivers, and following up on logs and incident reports.
- **CEO** is responsible for approving and reviewing this policy annually, ensuring adequate insurance is in place, and resourcing vehicle maintenance.

17. Breach of Policy

Failure to follow this policy may result in loss of driving privileges, and — depending on severity — review of a volunteer's placement or disciplinary action for staff, up to and including termination. Serious breaches (e.g. drink/drug driving, leaving an animal unattended in unsafe conditions, or disabling a vehicle safety feature) will be treated as an immediate suspension of driving privileges pending review.

Quick Reference — Before You Drive

- Licence current and on file
- Feeling well-rested, free of drugs and alcohol, and fit to drive
- Phone away/mounted and set up before moving
- PPE on hand (gloves, hi-vis, enclosed shoes)
- Quick visual check done (tyres, lights, fuel)
- Vehicle log ready to complete

Approved by the CEO on 19 August 2026. This policy will next be reviewed on 19 August 2027, or earlier following any incident. Questions about this policy should be directed to the Volunteer Coordinator or the Founder/Director.