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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 a 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,

Steve Hymel

SEXUAL HARASSMENT POLICY

**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 physician. 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 reflects 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 a 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 you last day of that 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 for purpose of the client's care, 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 in an emergency, instruct them to call the office. Occasional personal calls can be made on the company phones, so long as the calls are 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 a year, 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
- Judgment
- 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 directions 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 clients food unless other arrangements have been made (Live-ins 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 clients 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 judgment, 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 progressive 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 investigation on the part of COMFORT AT HOME. An employee who is accused of a violation will have 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 filled 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 insure 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 you next check.

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

Paydays are the 15<sup>th</sup> and the last day of the month. Payroll periods are from the 1<sup>st</sup> day of month to the 15<sup>th</sup> and from the 16<sup>th</sup> to the end of the month. A paycheck issued on the 15<sup>th</sup> is for the 16<sup>th</sup> to the end of the prior month. A check issued on the last day of the month is for the 1<sup>st</sup> to 15<sup>th</sup> 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 orientated 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 either 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 (CNA) 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 of 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 collecting 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 at 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 clients 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 employees 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 Procedure Manual located in the agency office.

Copies of selected important topics follows.

I hereby acknowledge.

Affix your signature below:

Caregiver's Name