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[www.mealsonwheelsplus.com](http://www.mealsonwheelsplus.com)

## *Volunteer Handbook*





VOLUNTEER AND COMMUNITY MEMBER  
GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE

Volunteers and community members who desire to lodge grievances may do so either verbally, or in writing by directing their concerns to the Executive Director. The Executive Director will consider the grievance and make a decision as to the appropriate action necessary within five working days from receipt of the grievance. The Executive Director will inform all parties involved of the decision, the factors considered in making the decision, and the measures, if any, to be taken.

If action taken by the Executive Director fails to satisfy the volunteer or community member, further action may be taken by appealing to the Executive Committee of the Board of Directors. Your written appeal must be received within five days of the receipt of the Executive Director's decision.

All grievances, oral or written, must include the name and address of the individual filing the grievance. Written grievances should be addressed to the Executive Director, or in case of further appeal, to the Board of Directors, Executive Committee at the following address:

Meals on Wheels Plus, Inc.  
P.O. Box 903  
Abilene, TX 79604



**MISSION STATEMENT**

**The mission of Meals on Wheels Plus is to enhance the quality of life for seniors and other eligible adults by providing nutritionally balanced meals and supportive services.**

Dear Volunteer:

The service you will provide to frail individuals in the Abilene area as a Meals on Wheels volunteer is deeply appreciated. I want to take this opportunity to thank you for the many miles you will travel and all of the hours you will contribute to help make this one of the best programs in the entire state.

Some other home delivered meal programs do not have a staff member visit the people they serve . . . or volunteers who report back when someone does not answer the door or needs something. We make a home visit before adding each person to the program and try to visit everyone at least once every year. That is hardly enough, and we depend on your contact a great deal!

It is important that you report back when you do not get an answer to your knock on the door. The person inside may be hurt or ill. They may be in the hospital or out of town and failed to notify us. If they are frequently absent, we may need to determine if they still need meals.

If you find someone with a medical emergency, please call 911 to request medical assistance, and then call the Meals on Wheels office. If you find someone who needs assistance other than for a medical emergency, please call the Meals on Wheels office at 672-5050, and we will try to find the appropriate agency or individual to call.

Let us know when a recipient needs extra food. We have a pantry of shelf stable items to share with them. Please feel free to take a few magazines when you deliver meals. Many of those we serve cannot afford magazines and enjoy reading. If someone is interested in getting books from the Abilene Public Library, let us know. We can sign them up for the "Books on Wheels" program. Call if you smell gas strongly when you deliver meals, or if someone needs a space heater, blanket, smoke detector or electric fan. Please convey all needs to us, and we will try to see that they are met.

Some of our recipients may have cancer, hepatitis, AIDS, etc. If you do not want to deliver meals to clients with certain types of health problems, such as these, please let us know.

Warmly Yours,  
*Betty L. Bradley*  
Betty L. Bradley, LBSW  
Executive Director



**FACT SHEET FOR VOLUNTEERS**



**1. WHAT IS MEALS ON WHEELS?**

Since 1975 Meals on Wheels Plus, a local non-profit organization, has been providing home delivered meals to Abilene's at risk adults. A hot noon meal is delivered to seniors and to adults with one or more disabilities who are unable to prepare balanced meals for themselves on a daily basis and need this service.

**2. HOW DID THE PROGRAM GET STARTED?**

In May 1971, the Community Action Program started a one year pilot project in Abilene using Emergency Food and Medical Service funds to provide a home delivered meal for 25 to 30 low income homebound elderly persons. Meals were purchased from a cooking school. In April 1972, Church Women United took over the program and began serving the eight most needy persons who had been receiving meals. The meals were picked up from three separate locations and delivered by volunteers. After three years, Church Women United realized that the resources of the entire community were needed to meet the growing number of requests for a home delivered meal.

Articles of Incorporation were filed in April 1975 and Meals on Wheels Plus, Inc. was formed. In May 1975, the first 25 member board of directors met and took over Abilene's home delivered meal program from Church Women United. There were approximately 80 people receiving meals. In July 1975, Betty L. Bradley became the Executive Director as a full-time volunteer. Office space and our own kitchen were made available in late 1977 by the University Baptist Church. For the next ten years, Meals on Wheels Plus operated from rent free space in the church basement. When the program outgrew the church kitchen, University Church of Christ made the property at the corner of North 10th and Mesquite available for construction of a kitchen and office complex. On March 16, 1987, the first meals were served from the kitchen located at 949 Mesquite Street. We served an average of 358 meals per day at that time.

By 2000, the program was serving more than 650 meals out of the kitchen built to accommodate up to 600 meals per day. The Meals on Wheels Board of Directors obtained ownership of the entire 900 block of Plum Street and built a new, larger kitchen and office facility across the alley from the Mesquite property. On June 15, 2004, the first meals were served from the new debt-free facility at 717 North 10<sup>th</sup> Street. The program had grown to serving more than 1,000 meals per day.

**WE CARE ABOUT YOUR SAFETY!!**

We want to make every effort to assure that you are not bitten by an animal while delivering.




If there are unrestrained dogs outside the house, you do not have to deliver the meal to that address. If possible, call the recipient on the phone and ask them if they can either come get their meal or restrain the dogs.

Clients are asked to keep inside dogs either restrained or in another room during meal delivery time. If there are unrestrained dogs inside, you do not have to deliver the meal.

Please let the office know any time you find unrestrained pets that are aggressive and we will talk with that recipient about the problem. Be cautious and stay safe! We appreciate you.

**FOR YOUR SAFETY, PLEASE DO NOT MAKE OR RECEIVE PHONE CALLS OR TEXT MESSAGES ON YOUR CELL PHONE WHILE DRIVING.**

**O'BAR WRECKER SERVICE**  
**3210 Plum St. Abilene, Texas**



**325-673-4581**

If you have car trouble while in Abilene delivering meals, O'Bar Wrecker Service will tow your vehicle free of charge to any location you select within the Abilene city limits.

Call the Meals on Wheels office, someone will meet you to pick up the meals and finish delivering your route.

**55 or Older?? Check out WEST TEXAS RSVP**

- Volunteers 55 years of age or older can sign up for the Retired Senior Volunteer Program
- You can volunteer for Meals on Wheels only, or learn about other opportunities
- RSVP offers free supplemental insurance while on duty.\*
- Awards & Annual Recognition Luncheon

**Call 793-3520 for more information.**

*\*Please be aware that Meals on Wheels does not have accident insurance on volunteers who deliver meals or work in the kitchen or office.*

## SIGNS OF ABUSE, NEGLECT OR EXPLOITATION

Many people are vulnerable to abuse, neglect or exploitation because they live alone or are dependent on others for care. Some have their money or property stolen by a predator, usually someone they know. More than half of all cases reported to Adult Protective Services involve neglect. Please review the possible indicators of Abuse, Neglect or Exploitation listed below:

### Physical Signs

- Injury that is inconsistent with its explanation
- Pain from touching
- Dehydration or malnutrition not caused by illness
- Poor coloration, sunken eyes or cheeks
- Overmedication or need for excessive medication
- Soiled clothing
- Lack of necessities such as food, water or utilities

### Behavioral Signs

- Fear, anxiety, agitation, anger, withdrawal, depression; disengagement from daily life
- Non-responsiveness, resignation, ambivalence
- Contradictory statements, implausible stories
- Hesitation to talk openly
- Disorientation vs. alertness

### Signs by Caregiver

- Prevents person from speaking or speaks for person
- Anger, indifference, aggressiveness toward the frail person
- History of substance abuse, mental illness, criminal behavior or family violence
- Provides conflicting accounts of incidents
- Overly attentive of the frail person
- Responds to burden of person's care with violence or neglect

### Signs of Financial Abuse

- Missing personal belongings, papers, credit cards
- Unpaid bills, unusual activity in bank account
- Documents signed when owner seems incapable of understanding
- Caregiver's refusal to spend money on person
- Signatures on documents that do not resemble person's

Volunteers are required to report to the Meals on Wheels office as soon as possible, but no later than 24 hours, any suspected abuse, neglect, or exploitation of a recipient. You may also call Adult Protective Services at 1-800-252-5400.

## 3. WHAT MEALS ARE SERVED?

A hot lunch is served Monday through Friday. Breakfast for the next day may also be delivered on Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday to a limited number of recipients who live alone, depending on available funding. Each menu is designed for everyone, including those who are diabetic, or someone who needs a low sodium/low fat diet. In addition, Low Potassium, Soft and Pureed diets are available.

## 4. WHO COOKS THE MEALS?

Meals are prepared by Meals on Wheels cooks in our own building, with menus approved by a Registered Dietician. The cooks are paid, but we also use volunteers in the kitchen.



## 5. WHAT IS SERVED?

Each recipient receives a hot family style noon meal. This consists of a choice of two different entrees. Both entrees receive the same vegetables, salad, dessert, etc. There is also two drink choices, 2% milk or calcium fortified orange juice.

## 6. WHO RECEIVES THE MEALS?

While many Meals on Wheels recipients are age 60 or older, the program is also available for younger adults who have disabilities. Meals can be served on a long-term basis or for a week or two while someone recovers from a hospital stay or accident. Meals on Wheels serves people who live in the Abilene, Texas area, as well as Runnels County, regardless of their financial situation.

## 7. WHEN ARE MEALS DELIVERED?

Meals are delivered each Monday through Friday between 11:00 a.m. and 1:00 p.m. The program is closed on Thanksgiving Day, Christmas Day and New Year's Day with a special holiday meal being served the day before each major holiday.

## 8. WHERE ARE THE MEALS DELIVERED?

Meals are delivered to homebound individuals living in the Abilene, Eula, Hamby, Hawley, Hodges, Potosi, Ballinger, Rowena and Winters area.

## 9. WHO PAYS FOR THE MEALS?

Meals are paid for by recipient donations as well as contributions from caring individuals, church groups of all faiths, businesses and service clubs. Title XX funds available through the Texas Department of Health & Human Services provide about 72% of the cost of meals for those who meet the need criteria. Title XX funds have to be matched by community contributions. Meals on Wheels is not a United Way Agency and is not an affiliate of a national organization.

## 10. WHO DELIVERS THE MEALS?

Meals are delivered by volunteer deliverers in their own vehicles at their own expense. Approximately 420 different volunteers are needed on a weekly basis to ensure meal delivery. In addition to a nutritious meal being provided, you supply a friendly visit and peace of mind by checking on many people who have few other visitors.

## INSTRUCTIONS

### GENERAL:



1. Each volunteer completes a "Volunteer Registration" form to be turned in to the Volunteer Coordinator. Please bring a copy of proof of insurance on all vehicles you will be using to deliver meals as well as your driver's license. We will make a copy for your file. We are required to do background checks on all volunteers before they actually go to clients' homes.
2. Please let us know if you cannot deliver on your scheduled day, preferably the day before, so we can arrange for a substitute driver.
3. Try to arrive at Meals on Wheels as close as possible to the pick-up time indicated on your route sheet. Because of the large number of routes, we have staggered pick up times. If you will be here more than 15 minutes past your assigned pick-up time, please call the office, as the route will be sent out with a staff member or substitute driver.
4. Print your name, as well as the names of those delivering meals with you, on the sign-in sheet. Provide your cell phone number, if you are carrying one with you, in case we need to contact you with a message. The sign-in sheets are at the official greeter desk. If you are a RSVP volunteer or college student, please record your volunteer hours on a special form kept on a clipboard at the desk. The Greeter will give you a copy of your route sheet for the day.

## CODE OF ETHICS FOR VOLUNTEERS

Meals on Wheels Plus, Inc. (MOW) recognizes the critical role of its volunteers, and is extremely grateful for their dedication, their time and their caring. Meals on Wheels accepts the service of all volunteers with the understanding that such service is at the sole discretion of the agency.

Meals on Wheels asks you as a volunteer to:

### **Performance Standards**

- Perform your service to the best of your ability, maintaining the client's interests as your primary focus.
- Maintain an environment free of harassment (physical, sexual, or verbal), discrimination and unprofessional conduct.
- Refrain from false, misrepresented or omitted information on a volunteer application form and understand that MOW cannot accept applications with such information.
- MOW asks volunteers to refrain from transporting clients in personal vehicles.
- Let us know if you cannot deliver your scheduled route. If absenteeism becomes excessive, your volunteer relationship will be reevaluated.

### **Confidentiality**

- All volunteers and staff are required by law to maintain the confidentiality of persons and records they come in contact with through their work with MOW. This includes, but is not limited to: a recipient's name, home address, telephone number, age, financial and health situations.
- Please destroy all route sheets after you finish delivering the route each day.

### **Conflict of Interest**

- Avoid activity construed as conflict of interest, i.e., neither accept loans or gifts of money or property from clients nor give gifts of money or property to clients, unless through an organized agency program.
- Refrain from offering medical, legal, or financial advice to clients.
- Any items of this nature should be referred to the MOW staff.

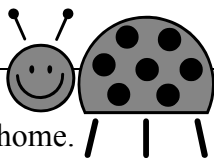
### **Respect of Cultural, Religious and Political Beliefs**

- Respect the cultural, religious and political views of clients and refrain from imposing your cultural, religious and political views on clients.

### **OBJECTIVE**

**To provide and/or deliver nutritional meals to those in need of this service without regard to financial status, race, color, national origin, age, sex, creed, disability, religion or political belief. Special emphasis will be given to homebound elderly and/or adults with a disability.**

10. **Please remember to maintain the confidentiality of all the recipients as required by law. This includes the recipient's name, address, telephone number, age, financial and health situations.** Do not share information with family or friends in a manner that identifies the recipient. **Route sheets should be destroyed after you finish delivering the route each day.** We have a paper shredder at Meals on Wheels that you can use if you choose to return to the kitchen after delivering meals.
11. Please call the Meals on Wheels office at **672-5050** if any recipient expresses a need for other assistance or their health situation seems to have deteriorated. It is most important that you notify the Meals on Wheels office if you suspect abuse, neglect or exploitation of the recipients.



### HIGHLIGHTS

1. Our meals are for people, so please do not leave the meals outside the home.
2. Deliver meal directly to the recipient or responsible party. If the recipient or responsible party are not home, **DO NOT** leave the meal. Take it with you and report the absence to the Meals on Wheels office.
3. Report any changes in the recipient's living condition, health, and/or physical and mental status to the Meals on Wheels office immediately.
4. **BE ALERT! BE AWARE!** Report any hazards in the home and any suspected cases of abuse, neglect and/or exploitation to the Meals on Wheels office immediately. Call **911** in case of an extreme emergency and then call the Meals on Wheels office. Use your best judgment. **Do not pick up anyone who has fallen.**
5. Take some magazines for the recipient to enjoy and do not forget about our food pantry for recipients in need. Clients can also have library books delivered by signing up with "Books on Wheels". When pet food is available, clients can get food for their dogs and/or cats. Convey all needs to the Meals on Wheels office.
6. **Be a friend! Remember, what you give lives!!** Many of the recipients seldom see anyone except our volunteer deliverers. Please take a couple of minutes to make each stop a brief, but meaningful visit.

5. Select your route card, according to your route number, from the container near the serving window, and place it in the card holder. The card will go in the holder on your side of any other cards already in place.
6. Bags containing the drink and cold food items are color coded. Burgundy and turquoise bags are in the refrigerated units. Other colors will be given to you with your meals from the kitchen. Obtain the correct number of bags of each color and ice them down in a cooler. Put a lid on the cooler.
7. Breakfast is all in one bag. It is a cold white bag. Obtain the correct number of bags from the refrigerated unit marked Breakfast Bags. All diets get the same breakfast. Ice the bags down in a cooler. **Only deliver breakfast to clients if breakfast is listed for them on the route sheet.**
8. **We are required to keep the milk and other cold food items at 41 degrees or lower. It is very important to use a layer of ice both under and over the bags and use a lid on the cooler.** We have purchased coolers for you to use. The cooler and boxes are stored in the box room located to the right of the entrance. When you are no longer able to deliver meals, please return the cooler for someone else to use.



9. Please line the hot meal carrier with new plastic bags. They will help keep the meals hot if you fold the top of the bags over the meals. For sanitation, please use new bags each time you deliver meals.
10. When your route number is called, pick up the tub of trays from the serving window. Move the tub of trays to a table, and transfer them into the hot meal carrier. It is very important that you count the number of meals you have been given. Please verify you have the correct number of each type entrée and of each diet. You don't want to be delivering meals and find you don't have the ones you need.

11. **DO NOT OPEN THE MEAL TRAYS UNTIL YOU ARE IN THE RECIPIENT'S HOME.** IF A RECIPIENT NEEDS ASSISTANCE OPENING CONTAINERS, PLEASE WASH YOUR HANDS WITH SOAP AND WATER.
12. The Volunteer Coordinator will be glad to help with any questions you may have. Help is available to carry out your meals, or you may pull your vehicle up in the driveway near the doors to load your meals.
13. If possible, put coolers with food in the interior of your vehicle rather than in the trunk. Keep lids tightly on coolers and leave the bags in the coolers until arriving at recipient's home to insure that the cold food items and milk are kept at 41 degrees Fahrenheit.

### DELIVERY INFORMATION:

1. Recipients may choose between two different entrees each day. They are mailed a copy of the menus, and can circle their choice of entrées and mail it back.



So, the entrée of choice is already marked on the route sheet. If the route sheet has Hot Lunch, then their meal tray will either not have a label at all or simply have a label for their special diet. Example: Soft.

If the route sheet has Hot Lunch B, then that client will get a meal with a label with a large B on it. If the client is on a special diet and wants Hot Lunch B, their meal tray will have two labels. Example: Soft & B.

2. **It is very important that all diets are delivered to the correct individuals.** Clients will receive different colored bags depending on their diet and drink choice.
3. Please double check street signs and house numbers as you approach a home. It is easy to try to deliver to the wrong house. Knock loudly or ring the doorbell upon arriving at a home. Allow the recipients plenty of time to reach the door as most are elderly, move slowly and have some hearing loss.
4. Please do not leave immediately if you do not get an answer. Instead, try the door--if unlocked, step just inside calling the recipient's name. If still no answer, continue calling as you carefully check the entire house for the recipient. Also check the back yard. **IF A RECIPIENT IS FOUND INJURED, CALL 911 AND THEN CALL THE MEALS ON WHEELS OFFICE AT 672-5050. Do not pick up anyone who has fallen.** You may aggravate the injury.

5. If the door is locked, check all other doors noting whether screens are locked from the inside. This would indicate the recipients' presence in the house. If you still do not get an answer, use a cell phone if you have one or go to the next stop on your route and ask if you can use the telephone. Call the recipient you did not find as he/she may hear a telephone better than a knock at the door. If you still cannot reach them, call the Meals on Wheels office at **672-5050** to report their absence.
6. Once the recipient answers the door, check to see if they need you to carry the meal inside and set it where they will eat lunch. If they need help opening the bag, drink carton and tray, please wash your hands with soap and water. Report to Meals on Wheels, any significant change in recipient's physical condition and/or living conditions.
7. **DO NOT leave the meals outside the home or with a neighbor.** You do not have to return the meal, but you must report any recipient not home to receive their meal. The meal should be handed directly to the recipient, if possible. If someone else answers the door, please ask for the recipient so that you can say hello and give them their meal. If for some reason, you are unable to see the recipient, you may leave the meal with someone else at the home. We want to be sure the recipient is going to get the meal.
8. We are **NOT** allowed to leave the meal in the home if the recipient or a responsible party is not there. Please notify Meals on Wheels immediately if the previous day's meal has not been eaten. If a previous day's meal is found uneaten, please remove it from the home. It could contain spoiled food and because of poor vision and sense of smell, a recipient might accidentally eat a spoiled meal and get very sick.
9. If you are unable to deliver a meal, call the Meals on Wheels office at 672-5050. Report the name and address of the person who did not respond to your knock at the door and what the situation was at the home. You will have an extra meal to give to someone else on the route. Anyone on a regular diet may have a special diet. You may leave an extra meal with a recipient to enjoy as an evening meal, give the extra meal to someone you know who would enjoy it or eat it yourself. If you return it to Meals on Wheels we will have to throw it away.