



## Guardian Training Manual



# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>Travel Information</b>	Page 1
<b>Washington Travel Agenda</b>	Page 2
<b>Company Assignment</b>	Page 3
<b>Airport and TSA Issues</b>	Page 3
<b>Safety in the Air</b>	Page 4
<b>Health Concerns</b>	Page 5
Deep Vein Thrombosis	Page 5
Dementia/Alzheimer's	Page 6
<b>Ground Safety</b>	Page 7
Loading the bus	Page 7
Unloading the bus	Page 8
Wheel Chair Safety	Page 9
<b>Potential Medical Problems</b>	Page 11
What is an emergency?	Page 11
Diabetes	Page 12
Nitroglycerin	Page 13
Respiratory Distress	Page 13
Dementia/Alzheimer's	Page 15
Dehydration	Page 17
<b>Accepting donations during the trip</b>	Page 17
<b>General Duties and Responsibilities</b>	Page 18



Honor Flight DFW is dedicated to honoring our veterans, more specifically our WWII veterans, for the sacrifices they have made to keep our nation safe by providing them with an all expense paid trip to visit the memorials in Washington D. C., those memorials which symbolize the spirit, sacrifice, and commitment of these American heroes.

The veterans' *safety is our single overriding priority*. Nothing takes greater precedence than the safe transport to Washington D.C. and return of all to their families.

## **TRAVEL INFORMATION**

### **Specific Flight information**

- Guardian emails
- Honor Flight DFW web site: <http://www.honorflightdfw.org> (Guardian's tab)

**Important Dates** document has dates of events and flight information.

- The veteran's received flight information in their flight confirmation letter, sent via USPS.

### **Hotel Information**

Marriott Crystal Gateway Marriott  
1700 Jefferson Davis Highway  
Arlington, Virginia 22202 USA

Trip Contact Phone Number 214-597-6119

## *Washington Travel Agenda*

It is impossible to give an exact schedule as the pace of the trip is based on the veteran's endurance. Additionally, unknown traffic jams, demonstrations, flight delays, government shutdowns, and/or foul weather will effect the flow of the agenda. Rest assured, our days will be full of sights and memories.

The company Leaders on your bus will keep you informed of the stops.

Below is a thumbnail sketch of what the trip days will look like.

### **First Day**

Arrive at Airport

Briefing and continental breakfast

Depart DFW

Arrive Reagan National Airport

Lunch at Air Force Memorial

WWII Memorial

Military Bugler to play TAPS at Atlantic side...group picture

Arrive hotel

6:30 Heroes Banquet

8:00-8:15 ~ R&R ~ Lights Out

### **Second Day**

Rise and Shine Breakfast

Depart hotel

Marine Memorial

Arlington Cemetery and Changing of the Guard

Vietnam, Lincoln, and Korean Memorials

Navy Memorial

Depart DC

Mail Call

Welcome Home Celebration

## Company Assignments

Veterans and Guardians are divided four Companies: Able, Baker, Charlie, and Dog. Each company has a designated Company Leader who will serve as your point of contact for the trip. The Company Leader are very experienced folk and can answer you and your veteran's question.

Your Company Leader will be sending you an **HFDFW email each Wednesday**. PLEASE read the emails thoroughly they will keep you up to date with trip logistics, important dates, and guardian duties (Mail Call, veteran gatherings).

## Airport and TSA Security Issues

- ★ Know how your veteran(s) are getting to the Pre-Flight Briefing and to the airport. Contact your Company Leader if your veteran is in need of transportation and you cannot provide the transportation for them
- ★ You will meet your veteran at the Honor Flight on the non-secure side of the airport. This is where you will check in and receive your boarding passes.
- ★ We do not want anyone to leave DFW without their medications, Ask your veteran to show you their medications before you depart for the airport. If they do not have their medications, they will not be able to board the plane.
- ★ If your veteran has a wheelchair or a walker, make sure that they are tagged with their name, address, and contact number.
- ★ For those of you who have a veteran with **dementia or Alzheimer's**, stick to them like glue in the airports. Even those who are normally very well-behaved, and very used to traveling can become distressed and disoriented in an airport, even one they've been in — they may abruptly start heading off in the wrong direction, leave a line in which you are standing, etc. Have them carry a bag so that you can hold onto them or hang onto their belt.
- ★ Prepare your veteran to go through the Security Check Point. Liquids, gels, and aerosols are permitted in 3-ounce containers. They are to be placed in a 1 quart-size clear plastic zip-top bag. One plastic bag per traveler.

★ Take your 3-1-1 bag out of your carry-on and place separately in bin. Declare all medically necessary liquids to a security officer at the checkpoint. Their pockets must be empty.

★ **Passengers 75 and older:**

Leave on shoes and light jackets through security checkpoints.

They will undergo an additional pass through Advanced Imaging Technology (AIT) to clear any anomalies detected during screening.

★ Place their, hat, watches, and personal belongings into the security bins. Put change into the small bowls provided at the security check point.

★ Please be aware of the special security issues of your veteran (cognitive impairment, liquid medication, limited vision, artificial joints, pacemakers, stents, oxygen, CPAP machine) and if appropriate, inform the TSA Security Agent about the special need of your veteran.

★ Be available to help your veteran to redress.

★ Before you leave the Security Check point area, make sure that your veteran has all of their personal belongings i.e. medication or other medical equipment, jackets, liquids, wallet, keys, cell phones, jacket, etc.



## **Safety in the Air**

In most cases the veterans and guardians will board the plane before the rest of the cabin is boarded. Assist your veteran onto the plane and into their seats. Place their carry-on luggage in the overhead bin and take note of where you placed the carry-on as you may need to locate it later in the flight for medications. The primary purpose of the airline attendants on the aircraft is passenger safety. Listen to the attendants and, without fail, follow their instructions. They know that they are traveling an unusual group of folks who have unique needs (frequent

trips to the lavatory, need to stretch their legs, short attention spans, deafness visual impairments,, etc.) and they will do all that they can to accommodate the needs of the veterans.

There will be medical folks who will walk the aisle to check on the veterans. All other guardians are asked stay in their seats and not to roam the cabin. Obviously, if a veteran needs assistance and you're the closest one to help, please offer your assistance and get the attention of a medical person.

### **Health Concerns with Flying**

The combination of low cabin pressure, low humidity, cramped seating, noise, "bumpy air" and inactivity all may pose problems for elderly travelers. Cabin pressure affects blood oxygenation in persons with respiratory, cardiac problems and/or vascular conditions. Motion sickness from a rough flight, although not dangerous to a healthy traveler, can affect a frail elder who is also compromised from the variety of environmental changes mentioned above.

### **Deep vein thrombosis and 'economy class syndrome'**

Many of our veterans have a history of coronary heart disease and obesity and sitting still for extended periods of time are known risk factors for the development of blood clots in the veins of the legs. This condition is known as deep vein thrombosis (DVT). Below is a list of actions that we can inform the veterans to take in order help to reduce the chance of DVT.



- ★ If your veteran takes Aspirin suggest, they take it a few hours before the flight.
- ★ Wear loose clothing.
- ★ Drink plenty of fluids to prevent dehydration
- ★ Take strolls up and down the aisle when possible.

- ★ Avoid sitting with legs crossed.
- ★ Suggest that your veteran perform leg and foot stretches and exercises while in flight.

## **Dementia/Alzheimer's**

A trip can be disconcerting to people with dementia because it throws them into a new and unfamiliar environment, it is very likely that their confusion will worsen during the trip. People with dementia do better when they know what to expect; use simple and clear explanations to what is currently happening.

- ★ Family might want to pack a few magazines, a deck of cards, a wallet or purse to rummage through, or other activities that your family member enjoys at home. These will help to distract the veteran from the change in environment and help to calm them by providing familiar items.

- ★ Eat regularly. Hunger may cause the person with dementia to get agitated or restless. It is a good idea to take your own supplies of food on board.

- ★ Have your veteran use the bathroom just before the

flight. The flight is about 3 hours long, so if you believe that they will need to use the bathroom plan-ahead, and consider how you will handle the situation. Will they need help? Is there a possibility they'll lock themselves inside and forget how to get the door open again?

- ★ Remember to take your veteran to the lavatory about an hour before the end of the flight, so they won't need to go after the pilot has announced that all passengers must remain seated during landing.



## Ground Safety



~ Veterans will ride on one bus and guardian one bus

### Loading the Bus

Guardians will load and unload the wheelchairs and walkers into the luggage compartment on the bus. Follow the Company Leaders instructions.

**One Veteran at a time** and they must be hands free while loading and unloading canes, packages, blankets

Guardian bus loading is an assigned duty of the medical and Active Duty teams, they will be **onboard** the bus to assist veterans to their seats. Able bodied will sit in the back of the bus. The first 5 rows are reserved for those needing assistance, and seat/s will be reserved by the wheelchair lift for those requiring the lift. Two (2) veteran's bus guardians will assist the veterans onto the bus. One guardian will be at the top of the stairs assisting and one guardian will assist on the ground by the door. *These two guardians will be in control of the flow of boarding.*

**Boarding Order for veteran ~ be ready to escort your veteran to bus in the following order**

1. **Able body veterans** should sit towards the back of the bus.
2. **Those needing assistance** (unsteady, visual difficulties, unbalanced, weak), should be seated in the front to the middle of the bus.
3. **Those in wheelchairs.** If they can maneuver the steps they will be seated in the first few rows, and if they cannot use steps safely they will use the wheel chair lift in the back of the bus.

Guardians may board their bus once their assistance is not needed on the ground. A count of all veterans and guardians will be completed by the Company Leaders.

## Unloading the Bus



Guardians they will unload wheelchair and/or luggage and prepare to receive their veteran **Set the wheelchair in a line away from the door of the bus.**

**Guardian support for unloading the bus is an assigned duty of the medical and Active Duty teams**

**Four assigned guardians (4)** will stay onboard the bus and assist veterans with the order of unloading. **Two Guardians (2) will be assigned to** assist Veterans off the bus. One Veteran at a time and they must be hands free while loading and unloading....take canes, packages, blankets. One guardian will be at the top of the stairs assisting and one guardian will assist on the ground by the door. *These two guardians will be in control of the flow of unloading.*

**Unloading Order ~ Be ready to receive your veteran in the following order ~ pay attention as their names will be called before they start to unload.**

1. Able body veterans
2. Veterans needing some assistance.
3. Veterans in wheelchairs

**Wheel Chair Safety** Although you might not be assigned someone who is in a wheelchair there may come a point in the trip that your veteran will require the

assistance of a wheelchair. When asked to move someone in a wheelchair, you are being entrusted with that person's safety.

★ The golden rule when it comes to pushing wheelchairs. Treat the individual how you want to be treated.

★ Ask how you can help the veteran and then follow the instructions provided.

★ Always let the veteran know when you are beginning to push the wheelchair.

★ Avoid sudden starts and stops.

★ Do not attempt to go up or to go down steep slopes.

★ Both brakes must be engaged whenever the wheelchair is not in motion and only released when the veteran is in the chair and ready to be moved.



★ When pushing the wheelchair, be sure that your speed does not exceed that of a brisk walk.

★ Grab the handles with both hands. Lean your body into the chair and push forward. Do not lean downward or backwards on the chair because it can cause the wheelchair to tip backwards.

### **Helping someone into a wheelchair**

1. Make sure that both of the brakes are in place and the front casters face forward.
2. Fold up both footplates and swing them to the sides or up.
3. Hold the handles of the wheelchair so that it will not move.
4. Ask the veteran to back up to the wheelchair, so that they feel the edge of the seat against their legs.
5. Stand in front and grasp the person's belt on each side of his body.
6. Ask the veteran to assist with sitting by placing both their hands on the front of the armrests and instruct them to lower themselves onto the seat.
7. Be cautious not to let them sit down too fast or hard as this might tip the wheelchair backwards.
8. Bring the footrests to the front and/or fold down the footplates. Have them

place their feet on the footplates, their heels should be at the back of the foot plate.

## Helping someone up from a wheelchair

1. Back the wheelchair so that the front casters face forward.
2. Make sure that both the brakes are in place.
3. Fold up both footplates and swing them to the sides or up, depending on the chair model.
4. If possible, have someone to hold the handles of the wheelchair so that it will not move.
5. Have the veteran scoot to the front of the seat.

### **If the veteran does not need assistance with rising**

- a. Make sure the veteran places both feet firmly on the ground, slightly apart and with one foot further back.
- b. Have them place both hands on the front of the armrests, lean forward with their head and shoulders over their knees to give balance, and then push themselves up.

### **If they need assistance with rising:**

- a. Stand in front and grasp the veteran's belt on each side. If the veteran has a walker, you must stand to the side and grasp the belt from the side.
- b. Place one foot in front of the other if you are assisting from the front.
  - c. Make sure that the veteran's feet are set firmly on the ground.
  - d. Ask the veteran to assist with standing by pushing up on the armrests with both hands.
  - e. Keep your back as straight, as possible, when assisting with any level of lifting. Use your leg strength not your back.
  - f. Do **NOT let** the person put their hands around your shoulders/neck when you are assisting with lifting.



## Potential Medical Problems

### Is it an Emergency?

#### Warning Signs and Symptoms

- ★ Difficulty breathing, shortness of breath
- ★ Chest or upper abdominal pain or pressure lasting two minutes or more
- ★ Fainting, sudden dizziness, weakness
- ★ Changes in vision
- ★ Difficulty speaking
- ★ Confusion or changes in mental status, unusual behavior, difficulty waking
- ★ Any sudden or severe pain
- ★ Uncontrolled bleeding

If you are faced with an emergency DO NOT leave your veteran. Help the veteran to sit or lay down on the ground and call for HELP. Reassure your veteran that help is on the way and that you will not leave them.

Medical team member (identified by the 'red cross' + on their name tags ) are there to assist if medical issues arise, however they do not provide the personal care of the veterans. Please, do not hesitate to ask for their assistance.



However, **you** are the first line of defense in alerting the medical team to changes in your veterans behavior (i.e. listless, confused, unusually fatigued, mood changes) and/or physical changes (i.e. short of breath, difficulty walking, chest pains, flushed).

Get to know what is “normal” for your veteran as this information is critical to assessing the veteran. Your medical team will be asking you about changes you have observed and your input is invaluable to their proper assessment.

## Diabetes

We have quite a few diabetic veterans on this trip and some are on Insulin. If you have a veteran with diabetes it will be highlighted on their information sheet along with the name of medication, dosage and how often it should be taken.

### **Ask/remind your veteran to take their diabetes medication.**

Diabetics may experience life-threatening emergencies from too much or too little insulin in their bodies. Remind your veterans to take their diabetic medication.

Too much insulin can cause a low sugar level (hypoglycemia), which can lead to insulin shock.

### ***Symptoms Hypoglycemia:***

- ★ Hunger
- ★ Shakiness
- ★ Nervousness
- ★ Sweating
- ★ Dizziness or light-headedness
- ★ Sleepiness
- ★ Confusion
- ★ Difficulty speaking
- ★ Anxiety
- ★ Weakness



Everyone who is guardian to a veteran who has diabetes should carry 5-6 hard candies in their pockets. Glucose tablets can be found in the emergency bags.

Not enough insulin can cause a high level of sugar (hyperglycemia) which can cause a diabetic coma. Hyperglycemia when the blood glucose is too high. It is the opposite of hypoglycemia. Hyperglycemia needs to be treated immediately as it is a major cause of complications among people with diabetes.

## Symptoms of Hyperglycemia

- ★ Increased thirst
- ★ Increased urination
- ★ Nausea/vomiting
- ★ Deep and/or rapid breathing
- ★ Abdominal pain
- ★ Fruity smelling breath
- ★ Loss of consciousness



**\*\*\* Contact your medical team immediately, if you see signs and symptoms of hypoglycemia or hyperglycemia**

## Nitroglycerin

Many of the veterans use Nitroglycerin. It relaxes and expands (dilates) veins and arteries. These medicines are very effective for treating angina (chest pain). If your veteran is on Nitroglycerin it will be highlighted on the veteran information sheet. KNOW WHERE your veteran keeps their Nitroglycerin. You may be called upon to help locate it and assist your veteran is taking the Nitroglycerin

**Chest pain related to cardiac problems** In general, chest pain related to a heart attack or another heart problem is associated with one or more of the following:

- ★ Pressure, fullness or tightness in your chest
- ★ Crushing or searing pain that radiates to your back, neck, jaw, shoulders and arms, especially your left arm.
- ★ Pain that lasts more than a few minutes, goes away or comes back or varies in intensity
- ★ Shortness of breath, sweating, dizziness or nausea

Below are instructions for two (2) of the most common forms of Nitroglycerin:

**Sublingual (under the tongue or transmucosal).**

Place the tablet *under the tongue, between the lip and gum, or between the cheek and gum* and let it dissolve there. Do not eat, drink, smoke, or use chewing tobacco while a tablet is dissolving. Nitroglycerin dissolves best when your mouth is dry. Do not chew, crush, or swallow the tablets. You may feel a slight tingling or stinging sensation when the medicine is dissolving.



**Translingual.** This medicine is in the form of an aerosol spray, that is sprayed on- to or *under the tongue*. Do not shake the container. Do not inhale the spray. Do not spit out the medicine and do not rinse your mouth for 5 to 10 minutes after using the medicine. Follow your healthcare provider's directions for the use of this medicine.

**\*\*\* Contact your medical team immediately, if you see signs and symptoms chest pain.**

## **Respiratory Distress**

We also have a number of veterans with lung problems. Recognition of the signs and symptoms of respiratory problems allows quick action that may help solve or ease the problem for the veteran.

Signs and Symptoms of breathing problems

- ★ Increased breathlessness
- ★ Inability to speak in complete sentences
- ★ Increased number of breaths per minute
- ★ Increased cough and sputum production

- ★ Change in the color and/or thickness of the sputum
- ★ Wheezing
- ★ Chest tightness
- ★ Fever



If you believe your veteran is having *difficulty with breathing*, follow the action listed below:

- ★ Have the veteran sit in the upright position.
- ★ Loosen the binding clothing, such as tight collar or belt.
- ★ Offer them reassurance to regain the control of breathing.

**\*\*\* Contact your medical team immediately, if you see signs and symptoms respiratory distress.**

## **Dementia/Alzheimer's**

Create a safe away-from-home environment:

- ★ It is entirely possible that your veteran will wander when they are in a strange place, so you need to be ready to prevent wandering and also be ready to find them if they do take off.
- ★ Make your veteran has identification on them at ALL times. The identification should include their name and their contact information. The identification card should be placed in their wallet, purse, and/or pocket. This step should be taken even if you are sure your veteran still remembers his name. In a stressful situation, even the most basic memories can slip away from a person with Alzheimer's.
- ★ Have a recent picture of your veteran preferably one showing the way they dressed on the day of the flight, so you can show people what they look like if they do manage to get lost. Your cell phone camera is an excellent resource for taking identification photographs.
- ★ Carry all identification, documents, and tickets yourself—don't let your veteran be responsible for holding important items. You may also want to bring

copies of important health records or prescriptions in case they need to see a doctor while you are away from home.

★ Lock the hotel door using the safety latch. Sleep in the bed closest to the door. You might also consider propping a chair against the door when you're ready for bed or bring along a rubber door wedge. Get one that's dark in color so it won't stand out against the carpet. A rubber wedge down low on the floor doesn't catch the eye the way locks on doors do, so it's a good supplement even if there are locks.

★ Take a nightlight or leave the bathroom light on all night.

★ Unfamiliar knobs can be confusing to a person with dementia. For example, make sure you turn the shower on and adjust the temperature.

★ Be aware of large restrooms that have more than one entry or exit point. Consider using disabled and family facilities where possible, as they may provide more space and you can remain together.

★ It's always good to have an extra set of clothes available in case there is an incidence of incontinence — even if they have never been incontinent before.

- Recognize rising anxiety and take steps to get the veteran to a quiet area and keep them there until the anxiety disappears.

**\*\*\* Contact a medical team immediately, if you need assistance with your veteran**

## **Dehydration**

Dehydration is a major cause for hospitalization among the elderly. Dehydration in the elderly is especially common for a number of reasons. Some medications such as those for high blood pressure or antidepressants are diuretic. Some medications may cause patients to sweat more. A person's sense of thirst be



comes less acute as they age. Frail seniors have a harder time getting up to get a drink when they're thirsty, or they rely on caregivers who can't sense that they need fluids.

Signs and symptoms include irritability, confusion, rapid heart rate, decreased urine output, dry skin, decreased blood pressure, and dizziness.

★ Offer water to your veteran at every stop on the bus.

★ Caffeinated drinks can be dehydrating.

**\*\*\*Contact your medical team immediately, if you see signs and symptoms of dehydration.**

### **Accepting donations during the trip**

★ We do not accept donations from our veterans prior to or during the trip.

★ We DO NOT accept donations from the public at the memorials.

★ If someone approaches you and wishes to donate, we will have business

cards that will direct that person to our web site.



### **General Duties and Responsibilities**

★ Let your veterans know about the travel agenda and what to expect on the trip.

★ You are now your veteran's best friend, so use common sense.

★ Tell them you're looking forward to meeting them and what an honor it is travel with them and how much you appreciate their service to our country!

★ Insure that their emergency contacts have your cell phone number.

Keep their numbers with you at all times.

★ Mail call is a surprise for your veterans.

Have their family and friends write them letters.

You should write a letter to your veteran/s.

Please insure all letters are ready for distribution and stuffing of the envelopes after the Heroes Banquet.



★ Many of the memorials are not age friendly. Keep an eye out for steps, cobblestones, and uneven surfaces.

Many of the memorials are not age friendly.

★ Watch for steps, cobblestones, and uneven surfaces.



★ Have snacks with you (crackers/hard candies)

★ Veterans are encouraged to wear their medals.

★ Inform the veterans that U.S. law allows all veterans and servicemen to salute the flag when not in uniform.

★ Some veterans tire and choose to remain on the bus. You MUST remain on the bus with your veteran unless, you are given clearance by your Company Leader.



★ Bring your camera and take lots of pictures of the veterans.

★ **NO ALCOHOL is allowed on the trip.**

★ Many of the veterans on the trip are hard of hearing and have a hard time hearing the Tour Guide on the bus. You and your veteran will be given Tour Notes before we travel so please read and use the notes to enhance the

Veteran's experience while touring the memorials.

★YOU are responsible for your veterans from the time they arrive at the Airport until the time they leave the airport. Make sure the person driving them home has your contact information.

We promise you a trip that you will not soon forget. You are doing an incredible service by being a guardian for these heroes – never forget that!!

Thank you for your wonderful act of kindness and patriotism.

