Ground Guardian Manual

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Welcome

Congratulations on becoming a Ground Guardian with Uphaven!

On behalf of our Board and staff, we are excited to welcome you to our community of volunteer drivers – a role which we call a Ground Guardian! Uphaven Operations, our mission coordination team, is here to make your first mission, and every mission thereafter, a rewarding experience.

This manual will give you a good start on learning about Uphaven and what being a Ground Guardian with us is all about. Read it. Take it with you. Use it!

About Uphaven

Our mission.

At Uphaven, we help families stay connected to pediatric medical care and to each other throughout a child's healthcare journey.

Who we are.

Uphaven is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization offering free flights and ground transportation services for families traveling to and from healthcare facilities in the Milwaukee area – we're all about making sure nothing gets in the way of kids receiving the care they need, right by their family's side. No distance or financial hurdles can stop us!

What we do.

Uphaven is built on a foundation of love, integrity, and a deep understanding of what families need most – each other. We offer families a glimmer of strength, solace, and empowerment, especially at a time when all they may know how to feel is scared or helpless. Uphaven strives to keep care close and families closer, to literally lift them UP into a HAVEN of love, peace, and courage during their toughest times.

On Leni's wings we fly.

Our values.

Integrity – Doing what we say and keeping people first.

Authenticity – Staying true to our purpose, mission, and to ourselves.

Empathy – Always considering the unique journey of families and team members.

Safety – Safe place, safe travels.

Accessibility – Access to care, access to family, access to home.

Our values mean so much to us and we trust that they do to you, too. They should not only be used as guardrails for how we reach our families in need, but also with our partners, our communities, and most importantly, yourself. We want so badly for you to feel at home here, for you to feel comfortable, supported, to be fulfilled, and to thrive. We want our success to be measured by the combination of the impact we make for the lives of the families we are supporting, and by the happiness you feel in your heart. Your heart is what keeps so many others going all around you and it's what keeps Uphaven's mission strong.

Uphaven Websites

Available missions: VPOIDS.

Our mission coordination system, known as VPOIDS, where drivers can view and volunteer for upcoming missions, file mission reports, and print year-end summaries.

Flyuphaven.org

Our main website contains general information about our organization. Some key features include:

- ➔ **Volunteer Resources** – download copies of important and useful documents, such as handbooks, forms, waivers, and best practices summaries.
- ➔ **Volunteer Portal** – log into VPOIDS via the Volunteer Portal link on our website.
- ➔ **News & Stories** – view our newsletter with updates, stories, and articles published online.

Our Passengers

People we fly.

Uphaven provides flights for children and their families. The people we serve include:

- ➔ Children with medical appointments and/or follow-up care.
- ➔ Families that require long-term hospital stay support – This includes parents of a child, siblings, friends, religious support, etc.
- ➔ Urgent family supplement support whose child is transported to Children's Wisconsin for advanced care via helicopter and their transport team.

Partnerships with other organizations.

Uphaven works closely with the Ronald McDonald House Charities of Eastern Wisconsin and Children's Wisconsin. They have been with us since our beginning and have shown us how to lend a helping hand in ways families never even think to ask. Uphaven is here to extend that love and care to families, making sure it's delivered efficiently, reliably, safely, and sustainably. We are also working with partner airlines, aircraft charter and local Part 135 flight operators when needed and as resources are available. We will continue to expand our partnerships across the region to increase efficiencies and grow our impact.

Qualifying a passenger.

Our Operations team ensures that each family meets specific requirements before posting a mission. The following is an outline of qualifications:

- ➔ Children (18 years old or younger) and their families.
- ➔ Receiving care at Children's Wisconsin and/or lodging at Ronald McDonald House Charities of Eastern Wisconsin.
- ➔ Traveling two hours or more from the Milwaukee area (drive time).
- ➔ Medically stable and requiring no medical assistance during a flight.
- ➔ Able to walk, climb stairs, and get into an aircraft seat without help.
- ➔ Non-emergency situation: Uphaven does not provide Air Ambulance or emergency rescue services.
- ➔ Uphaven embraces all families, regardless of financial situations, as applicable. We do, however, ask that families be mindful, as each mission represents considerable cost and resources to you. We ask that families consider making a donation to Uphaven if financially able. There may be a financial eligibility requirement for longer flights supported by airlines and other charter partners, governed by their policies.

Volunteer Policies

Volunteer Driver applicant checklist.

1. Read and review this Ground Guardian Manual.
2. Assemble the required documentation (see in section below) and have ready to upload to your account in VPOIDS.
3. Access the Uphaven Information Database System (VPOIDS). Use your member ID# (emailed to you after your application is processed) to create a username and password.
4. Complete the online Volunteer Driver Orientation: training.flyuphaven.org. See below section for more information.

Required documentation.

Prior to driving a mission, all Ground Guardian drivers must provide Uphaven proof of:

- ➔ Driver's license,
- ➔ Insurance coverage (minimum state requirements), and
- ➔ Current vehicle registration.

Note: drivers must also have license, registration, and insurance information on them while driving a mission.

Driving without proper documentation may result in your being suspended from Ground Guardian Driver status and/or denied future missions.

Ground guardian online orientation.

To become a Ground Guardian, volunteers must first complete an online orientation at training.flyuphaven.org.

The purposes of the online Mission Orientation are:

- ➔ To confirm that the Volunteer Driver applicant meets Uphaven Volunteer Driver Requirements.
- ➔ To provide the new Volunteer Driver a thorough review of our safety policies, passenger considerations, coordination procedures.
- ➔ To resolve questions the Volunteer Driver may have.
- ➔ To prepare the Volunteer Driver for what to expect and how to conduct a mission.

- ➔ To provide Uphaven Volunteer Drivers a handy reference.
- ➔ To provide prospective Volunteer Drivers an overview of Uphaven' practices and procedures.

Safety Above All Else!

This section contains Uphaven safety policies that must be followed by all ground volunteers and staff.

As a Ground Guardian, you must always be focused on safety as you plan and execute your missions. It is your responsibility to

- ➔ Plan and coordinate the drive,
- ➔ Determine your ability to conduct the trip safely within the mission timeframe,
- ➔ Cancel the trip if conditions dictate, and
- ➔ Do your best to assure your passengers' safety and comfort.

Safe transportation operations are the primary consideration of all Uphaven staff and volunteers. This applies to everyone in the Uphaven organization, including pilots, drivers, staff, and other volunteers.

Three rules of safety.

Drivers are expected to assume a professional manner while completing an Uphaven mission. Safe missions start with a driver's expectations and attitude. Uphaven's three rules of safety are:

1. No driver is required to accept any mission.
2. No driver is required to complete a mission if at all in doubt about completing it safely.
3. No driver may compromise safety in any way to complete a mission.

Canceling a mission.

Canceling a mission due to safety is considered a demonstration of good judgment and will never be criticized.

Seatbelts and child restraints/car seats.

Seatbelts must always be worn by all passengers.

- ➔ Young children and babies MUST be in appropriate child or infant car seats.
- ➔ Child or infant car seats MUST be secured appropriately to passenger seats and oriented correctly for the age of the child and type of seat.
- ➔ No car seat should ever be placed in the front seat.

Please review current National Highway Traffic Safety Administration Car Seat Guidelines here.

Important! Do not agree to provide transportation for a child who is not properly restrained in an appropriate car seat. If a car seat(s) is required but not supplied by the family, please contact Uphaven at (414) 207-4567.

Avoid a risky mindset.

As an Uphaven driver you should never feel pressure to complete a mission if conditions are unsafe. Examples of unsafe conditions include:

- ➔ Weather that makes for dangerous driving.
- ➔ Mechanical problems with a vehicle.
- ➔ Driver impairment of any kind.

If you are ever in doubt about your ability to complete a trip safely due to these or other conditions, you are encouraged to change or cancel the trip.

Passenger safety and comfort.

As a Ground Guardian, you are expected to pay close attention to your passenger comfort and safety. Uphaven passengers are often under a great deal of stress and anxiety. For passengers going to the airport, their anxiety may be even greater if they have never flown in a small plane before. If your passengers are uncomfortable for any reason, it is your responsibility to do what you can to make them more comfortable.

Consequences of non-compliance.

Failure to carry out Uphaven's safety policies may result in your being suspended from Ground Guardian status and/or denied future missions.

Mission Procedures

Uphaven has an online database system known as VPOIDS (Volunteer Pilots Organization Information Database) for communicating with our members and for facilitating mission coordination.

Members are typically notified of upcoming missions by email or by logging into VPOIDS Available Missions list. VPOIDS is accessible by members 24/7 and requires your username and password for access. You can bookmark this URL for quick access in the future: volunteers.flyuphaven.org.

Here are a few of the things you can do using VPOIDS:

- ➔ View a list of missions available for drivers.
- ➔ Subscribe/unsubscribe to email distribution lists that keep you informed about missions available, upcoming events, and so forth.
- ➔ File mission reports.
- ➔ View a list of other Uphaven members.
- ➔ Update your personal information in our database.
- ➔ Renew your membership.
- ➔ Check the Calendar of Events to see what's coming up.

Managing your account settings.

Once you've logged in to VPOIDS, you will see a link to "Account Settings" at the top of the page under the Account Settings link. There, you can manage email subscriptions, change your personal data, change your password, post your availability, and upload documents.

Procedures for requesting a mission.

Before you request a mission

You must be approved as a qualified Volunteer Driver in accordance with Uphaven procedures at the time of each mission.

If you have any questions about these policies or procedures, please contact the Uphaven office at (414) 207-4567.

Getting a mission to drive

You may secure a mission by one or more of the following:

1. **VPOIDS**: You can bookmark the Available Missions list by going to VPOIDS and saving it in your favorites. (Note: This is the most current information on mission availability and the most expeditious way of requesting a mission.)
2. **Email distribution**: You are subscribed to an email distribution list that sends a list of available missions twice each week. To opt out of this email list, log on to the VPOIDS system and click on the Account Setting link at the top of the page.
3. **Calling Uphaven Operations directly**: You may call the office at (414) 207-4567 to inform Uphaven Operations of your availability. You may be able to connect to a mission at the time of your call.
4. **A call or text from an Uphaven Coordinator**: You may receive a call or text message from either Uphaven Operations staff or from a volunteer requesting you to drive a mission. You are never obligated to drive a mission.
5. **Periodic Email Requests to Drive a Mission**: Uphaven Operations regularly sends out emails requesting drivers for upcoming missions that have not been covered, for last minute driver cancellations or in rare cases for last minute mission requests.

List of available missions & requesting a mission

When you see a mission you are interested in driving, click on "REQUEST THIS MISSION". Complete any additional information requested and it will be submitted to the operations team. There is a comment box which is helpful to the staff if you can put any notes in this field about your flexibility, suggestions, or concerns. The operations staff reviews and considers these comments prior to assigning missions.

Many of our missions have more than one leg. The list shows any mission with one or more mission legs available. Other legs are shown even if they are taken so that you will know that the mission is a relay. In some cases, the mission will be a relay with another volunteer pilot/driver organization.

You will receive an email acknowledging the request; this does not yet confirm you have been assigned the mission. You will then receive a separate email to confirm that you have been assigned the mission or that it has been assigned to someone else or canceled. Finally, you will receive the Mission Assignment Form/Itinerary with all the details of your flight.

If the system indicates that there are other requests already in the queue, we encourage you to enter the request anyway. We will contact you if the other request(s) fall through, or you may request the mission as a backup driver. Backup drivers are a very important way for us to prevent last-minute cancellations in the event of unexpected problems.

View information for upcoming missions assigned to you.

You can view a list of the missions you are assigned to by clicking the "Mission Summary" link on the left- hand menu. It is important to periodically check the passenger data for any possible updates or data changes on your missions. Hub regularly will send drivers any changed data, but this assures that nothing is missed.

Once you have accepted a mission.

Uphaven Operations staff will always have qualified a passenger for a mission. The qualification process includes:

- ➔ In the case of a medically related mission, obtaining a medical release from the passenger's physician, and
- ➔ Determining that the circumstances warrant Uphaven volunteer driver services.

If you have any questions regarding criteria for qualifying for a mission, please contact the Operations staff.

Mission assignment form

You will be provided a copy of the Mission Assignment form by email. Please review the Mission Assignment form prior to contacting your passenger. The form will include:

1. Passenger's name, address and phone number(s),
2. Pilots name(s), address, and phone number(s) (if applicable),
3. Name(s) of any passenger companions,
4. Flight and/or appointment times,
5. Agency name, contact person(s) and phone numbers,
6. Medical situation of passenger and any special needs,
7. Scheduled date of drive,
8. Origin and destination facilities/locations,
9. If applicable, the phone number of other drivers on other leg(s) of mission,
10. Destination information, e.g., medical facility, airport, lodging, etc., and
11. Baggage and/or any medical equipment, (e.g. wheelchair, oxygen, car seat).

Contacting a passenger.

Once you have reviewed your Mission Assignment form, you should contact your passenger as soon as possible.

- ➔ <u>If you are driving your passenger to or from the airport for a connecting flight</u>, call the pilot first to review the mission itinerary. Call your passenger after you have talked to the pilot.
- ➔ <u>If there is no flight involved</u>, call your passenger immediately to introduce yourself and review the mission itinerary.

Contact with the passenger must be made immediately, regardless of when the mission is scheduled for, even if you don't have all the details at that moment. Passengers can get anxious when they do not know a driver has been assigned to their drive.

Plan and review details about the mission with your passenger, or the requester if Uphaven staff directs you to contact the requester instead.

1. Confirm departure/arrival time with passengers.
2. Inform passengers of appropriate meeting spot. Be very specific; for example, the exact building, inside or outside, the color of your car and clothes.
3. Inform passenger and pilot of your estimated arrival time.
4. Describe yourself and ask the passenger to describe himself/herself.
5. Describe the car and give the license plate number.
6. Although passengers have already been informed that they should have backup plans in case of a cancellation, it would be wise to remind them to do so. They should either be able to change their appointment or have an alternate ground transportation plan.

If the passenger is connecting with a flight and is unclear about the flight's arrival or departure time, then instruct the passenger to contact the pilot and relay that information to you, the driver.

Note: It is important to remind the passenger that drive planning is based on the information provided to the Uphaven office and that it may not be possible to accommodate a change in the number of the passengers and baggage.

Contact the passenger again the day before the mission to reconfirm details.

Driving a mission.

Pre-departure checklist

	Driver's License, Vehicle Registration & Proof of Insurance
	Cell phone
	Uphaven badge
	Uphaven Ground Guardian Handbook
	Restroom
	Safety check
	Passenger comfort
	Secure oxygen tank, if applicable. **Note:** Only gas oxygen is allowed in a car.
	Do not provide passengers medication of any kind.

Uphaven identification

An Uphaven badge will be provided to you when you become eligible to drive a mission. Always wear your Uphaven badge when driving a mission. If you lose your badge, please call or email the Uphaven office and a new one will be provided. Wearing any Uphaven clothing is also recommended, e. g. shirt, hat, sweatshirt.

Note: Uphaven Clothing is periodically available for purchase. Contact us at volunteer@flyuphaven.org or (414) 207-4567 to inquire about availability.

Waiver of liability

Uphaven Operations will collect a one-time waiver from all passengers and their companions. The one-time waiver is collected as part of the clearance process for all missions and will apply towards all future missions for each passenger and their companions. These waivers will be accessible on "My Flights" in VPOIDS.

Exception: Liability Waivers for Companions

If the companion traveling on the day of the flight isn't listed on the itinerary, then it's possible that Uphaven Operations hasn't collected a one-time waiver for that companion. This new companion is required to sign the mission liability waiver through the "**Add additional signature**" function in VPOIDS prior to departure.

Liability Waivers for Mission Assistants

The only way to eliminate the need to collect a car-side mission liability waiver is for Mission Assistants (spouses, family, friends) to sign up as Uphaven Volunteers in advance of the mission date. We encourage you to bring your family members and friends as Mission Assistants, but we ask that they take a few minutes to sign up on our website prior to the trip.

If your Mission Assistant changes on the day of the mission, the mission liability waiver must be signed car-side by the Mission Assistant.

All passengers, including Mission Assistants or other personal companions, must sign the waiver before traveling on an Uphaven mission.

Use restroom

Prior to driving, suggest that passengers may wish to use the restroom before the trip.

Safety check

Assist passengers into your car and give any instructions that are pertinent.

- ➔ Ensure that all are securely buckled in.
- ➔ Ensure that all child restraints and car seats are properly installed.

Passenger comfort

Bring some water or juice with you and offer it to your passengers.

Be sensitive to passenger's wishes regarding talking about their family's medical condition. Some are very eager to converse about their health journey. Others prefer silence.

Secure Oxygen Tank (if applicable)

On occasion passengers request permission to bring oxygen canisters with them.

If a passenger requests oxygen…

- ➔ Uphaven will notify them ahead of time that only gas oxygen is allowed (no liquid oxygen).
- ➔ Uphaven will notify you in advance and your acceptance of the mission with this condition will be at your discretion.

If you agree to carry the oxygen tank…

- ➔ Be certain it is firmly secured.
- ➔ Passenger or companion must operate the oxygen container.

No Medication

Never give passengers medication of any kind.

Completing a mission.

See passenger safely out of your car

Upon arrival at your destination be of assistance as needed in connecting passengers with anyone who is meeting them. If needed, help them into or out of the medical facility or other location, or at the airport.

Wish the passenger well

Thank your passengers for the opportunity to drive them. Many passengers will be enthusiastic in their expression of thanks to you. Do not be surprised, however, if some passengers express little thanks. Their preoccupation with their family's health challenges frequently leave them little margin to be expressive of their feelings of appreciation, even though it is there.

File your mission report

Mission reports are to be filed within 24 hours of completing the mission. The online orientation and the VPOIDS site itself have walk-throughs for filing a mission report online.

Provide Feedback

Uphaven welcomes your feedback about any aspect of the mission. Please provide suggestions for improving the process, observations about what went particularly well, or other comments you may have.

Mission change or cancellation.

Missions may be changed or cancelled by any of the following

- ➔ Passenger or requester calls Uphaven office,
- ➔ Passenger or requester calls you directly,
- ➔ You change or cancel the mission, or
- ➔ The pilot changes or cancels the mission (if the mission includes a flight leg).

Passenger or requester call Uphaven office

If the passenger or requester calls the Uphaven office to cancel a mission, you will be informed immediately by Uphaven Operations.

Passenger or requester calls you directly

If the passenger or requester calls you directly to cancel a mission, immediately call

- ➔ Uphaven Operations at (414) 207-4567,
- ➔ Any pilots participating in the mission, and
- ➔ The location to which you are transporting the passenger.

You change or cancel the mission

If you must cancel or make any significant changes to the mission schedule due to weather, mechanical or other reasons, immediately call:

- ➔ The passenger, requestor, and/or social worker,
- ➔ Uphaven Operations at (414) 207-4567,
- ➔ The pilot (if applicable), and

➔ The location to which you are transporting the passenger.

The pilot changes or cancels the mission

Missions with flight legs are subject to change due to weather or other circumstances. If the pilot initiates a mission change or cancelation, either s/he will contact you and the passenger directly, or the Uphaven staff or volunteer will contact you and the passenger.

Contacting Uphaven office after business hours

If you feel the Uphaven office for any reason will not be able to notify a passenger, requester, pilot, or fellow driver of a change or cancelation immediately, e.g. it's after work hours or the weekend, please call the **24-hour Uphaven answering service at (414) 207-4567** to make note of the cancellation.

Mission photographs.

Uphaven encourages you to take pictures of your missions. We cannot guarantee that all pictures and information will be used, but general guidelines are to

➔ Take pictures close-up, and

➔ Use high-resolution digital camera.

There is an option to submit your photos when completing your mission report.

Permission for photographs

Before taking pictures, be certain anyone in the photo has initialled the item on the liability waiver giving permission for photographs. (Signatures would typically be obtained at this point by Uphaven staff.)

Your privacy.

Uphaven takes your privacy very seriously. Since your personal data is stored in our database, we have established a privacy policy which is available for viewing on the web site. In addition, anyone who gains access to private information must agree to an acceptable use policy covering the use and protection of private data.