Ground Guardian Manual

Revised February 2025

Uphaven, Inc
5651 N Lydell Ave. #170047
Milwaukee, WI 53217
(414) 207-4567
flyuphaven.org
operations@flyuphaven.org

Table of Contents

Click a title to visit that section!

Table of Contents **1**
Welcome **3**
Congratulations on becoming a Ground Guardian with Uphaven! 3
About Uphaven **3**
Our mission 3
Who we are 3
What we do 3
Our values 4
Uphaven Websites **4**
Available missions: Volunteer Portal 4
Flyuphaven.org 4
Our Passengers **5**
People we fly 5
Partnerships with other organizations 5
Qualifying a passenger 5
Volunteer Driver Policies **6**
Volunteer Driver requirements 6
Volunteer Driver applicant checklist 6
Safety Above All Else! **7**
Safety Is Your Responsibility! - Three rules of safety 7
Canceling a mission 7
Seatbelts and child restraints/car seats 7
Avoid a risky mindset 8
Passenger safety and comfort 8
Consequences of non-compliance 8
Mission Procedures **8**
Managing your account settings 9
Procedures for requesting a mission 9
Before you request a mission 9
Getting a mission to drive 9
List of available missions & requesting a mission 10
View information for upcoming missions assigned to you 10
Once you have accepted a mission 10
Contacting a passenger 11
Cancellations and changes 12
Driving a mission 13
Pre-departure checklist 13

Uphaven identification....13
Waiver of liability....14
Use restroom....14
Safety check....14
Passenger comfort....14
Secure Oxygen Tank (if applicable)....15
No Medication....15
Completion of mission....15
See passenger safely out of your car....15
Wish the passenger well....15
Post-drive: filing a mission report online....15
Mission photographs....16
Permission for photographs....16
Your privacy....16
Frequently Asked Questions....17
How does this all work?....17
How old do I need to be to drive with Uphaven?....17
How often do I need to drive with Uphaven?....17
What type of insurance do I need?....17
How much notice do I get before a mission?....17
What does a typical trip entail?....18
How big of a vehicle do I need?....18
What about car seats?....18
What if I'm a bit uncomfortable driving strangers?....19
How should I communicate with Uphaven staff and passengers?....19
Should I sign up if the weather is uncertain?....19
What's the deal with waivers and medical releases?....19
Can I share my Uphaven story on social media?....20

Welcome

Congratulations on becoming a Ground Guardian with Uphaven!

On behalf of our Board and team, 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: Volunteer Portal.

Our mission coordination system, known as the Volunteer Portal, is where drivers can see and volunteer for upcoming missions, view pending mission requests and upcoming assigned missions, and file mission reports.

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 in via the Volunteer Portal link at the top of 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 Driver Policies

Volunteer Driver requirements.

To prioritize the safety of both our drivers and the families we serve, Uphaven requires all drivers to meet the following minimum qualifications. Prior to driving a mission, all Ground Guardian drivers must provide Uphaven proof of:

- ➔ Driver's license,
- ➔ Insurance coverage (meeting 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 status and/or denied future missions.

Volunteer Driver applicant checklist.

1. Complete the Volunteer Application.
2. Review this manual you're reading right now!
3. Complete your self-paced, online Uphaven Volunteer Orientation. You'll receive an email with the link and password after completing your Application. Note that you can save your progress at any time by using the "Save" button at the bottom of each page.
4. Compile the required documents to upload at the end of your Orientation:
    - Proof of Auto Insurance
    - Profile picture
    - Driver's License
    - Current vehicle registration
5. Complete your background screening with TrueHire. You will receive instructions via email after completing the orientation. Can't find the information? Email us at volunteer@flyuphaven.org.
6. Hooray! You're now an official Uphaven Ground Guardian and ready to drive your first mission. You'll be emailed an invitation to set up your account for the Volunteer Portal.

Safety Above All Else!

This section contains Uphaven safety policies that must be followed by all volunteer drivers.

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.

Safety Is Your Responsibility! - 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 Volunteer Portal for communicating with our volunteer pilots and drivers and for facilitating mission coordination.

Members are typically notified of upcoming missions by email or by logging the Volunteer Portal and checking the Available Missions page. The portal is accessible by members 24/7 and requires your username and password for access.

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

- ➔ View a list of Available Missions that correspond to outstanding family requests for transportation.
- ➔ Request an Available Mission from the list, which communicates with Uphaven Operations that you are available and willing to drive that particular mission.
- ➔ View your Pending and Filled mission requests.
- ➔ Download a PDF of the Mission Itinerary once Uphaven Operations has reviewed your request and assigned you to the mission. This Mission Itinerary will also be emailed to you.
- ➔ File mission reports.
- ➔ Update your personal information in our database.
- ➔ View Uphaven announcements on the Volunteer Portal homepage.

Managing your account settings.

Once you've logged in to the Volunteer Portal, you will see different links at the top of the page. Click on the icon with your initials, and then click "My Profile." There, you can update your email address and change your password.

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.

You must meet the requirements as stipulated in the Uphaven Volunteer Affirmation Form. By signing this Affirmation form prior to driving an Uphaven mission, Volunteer Drivers agree to adhere to these requirements.

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. **Uphaven Volunteer Portal**: You can view and request available missions on the Available Mission page. (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, please let us know at operations@flyuphaven.org.
3. **Calling Uphaven Operations directly**: You may call the office at (414) 207-4567 to inquire about current available missions. You may be able to connect to a mission at the time of your call. You are also encouraged to inform the office of any trip you are making when you have space available in your car.
4. **A call or text from an Uphaven Coordinator**: You may receive a call or text message from Uphaven Operations staff or from a volunteer requesting you to drive a mission that we think fits your particular availability and vehicle. You are never obligated to drive a mission.
5. **Periodic Email Requests to Drive a Mission**: Uphaven Operations occasionally 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

On the Available Missions page of the Volunteer Portal, when you see a mission you are interested in driving, click on the "Request this mission!" button. The status of the mission will change to "Pending" and Uphaven Operations will be notified of your request.

You will receive an email from Uphaven Operations acknowledging your request and asking you to sign the Volunteer Affirmation form prior to assigning you the mission. Click the link in the email to fill out the quick form and sign.

After Uphaven Operations has reviewed your request and received your signed Affirmation, you will receive an email confirming your flight assignment and outlining details of your mission, including a PDF copy of your Mission Itinerary.

View information for upcoming missions assigned to you.

You can view a list of the missions you have requested (status is "Pending") and missions you are assigned to (status is "Assigned") by clicking the "My Missions" link at the top of the page on the Volunteer Portal.

Once your mission has officially been assigned, you will also see a button with the option to Download the Mission Itinerary for those trips.

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.

A copy of the Mission Itinerary with details for the family you will be driving will have been emailed to you. *Please read the entire form before making any phone calls*. The form will include:

1. Family member's name(s), address and phone number(s),
2. Uphaven volunteer pilots name(s), address, and phone number(s) (if applicable),
3. Name(s) of any family members/companions traveling,
4. Weights of all passengers and of baggage,
    a. NOTE: If you are driving the "to airport" drive and passengers make last-minute changes in the weights or additional companions listed on the Mission Itinerary that result in an increased weight or passenger numbers, it is imperative that you contact the Uphaven office before departing. Please remember that the pilot flying the flight may not have the same weight or seat capabilities.
    b. You as Volunteer Driver have the prerogative of denying or accommodating the increased baggage or additional passenger(s).
5. Flight and/or appointment times,
6. Agency name, contact person(s) and phone numbers,
7. Medical situation of child or other compelling need,
8. Scheduled date of drive,
9. Origin and facilities/locations, and
10. Baggage and/or any medical equipment description, (e.g. wheelchair, oxygen, car seat).

Contacting a passenger.

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

➔ If you are driving your passengers to or from the airport for a connecting flight, call the pilot first to review the mission itinerary. Call your passengers after you have talked to the pilot.

➔ If there is no flight involved, call your passengers immediately to introduce yourself and review the mission itinerary.

Contact with the pilot and family 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.

Your normal communications will be directly with the parent or guardian involved, unless Uphaven Operations has informed you that you are to contact the requester (for example, a social worker) instead of the parent/guardian).

Following is an example checklist for your initial contact with the family:

1. Confirm departure/arrival time.
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. Wearing Uphaven logo clothing can help with this process.
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.

Cancellations and changes.

If the mission must be cancelled:

1. If the passenger, requester, or pilot (if applicable) calls the Uphaven office to cancel a mission, you will be informed immediately by Uphaven Operations.

   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 Uphaven Operations will contact you and the passenger.

2. If the passenger or requester calls you to cancel, please inform Uphaven Operations at (414) 207-4567 immediately.

3. If you make any major changes in the mission schedule with the passenger, pilot, and/or requester, please inform Uphaven Operations at (414) 207-4567 immediately, even after-hours (please leave a message if your call is not answered).
    a. If you must cancel because of weather, mechanical or other reasons:
        i. Call passenger immediately
        ii. Call Uphaven, even if after-hours, at (414) 204-4567.
    b. You are strongly encouraged to cancel a mission whenever you feel a situation warrants a cancellation. Safety is our top priority. There is no passenger situation that should ever cause you to compromise the safety of a drive.

Driving a mission.

Pre-departure checklist

	Driver's License, Vehicle Registration & Proof of Insurance
	Cell phone
	Uphaven badge
	Uphaven Ground Guardian Handbook (accessible on website)
	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. 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.

Exception: Liability Waivers for Undisclosed Companions

If a family brings along a family member or companion traveling on the day of the drive that isn't listed on the itinerary, then it's possible that Uphaven Operations hasn't collected a one-time waiver for that passenger. This new passenger is required to sign the mission liability waiver through an online link or paper form. We will include this link on all Mission assignment confirmation emails and Mission Itinerary PDFs should you need to access it car-side. You may also choose to print and carry a blank form with you should you need it.

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.

Completion of 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.

Post-drive: filing a mission report online

After a drive, you will need to file a Mission Report. Filing the report online saves tremendously on staff and volunteer time.

1. Once you have logged on to the Volunteer Portal, click on "My Missions" at the top of the page.
2. Locate the mission for which you need to file the Mission Report and click the "File Mission Report" button.
3. Refer to the details at the top of the page and complete the short form below with

Mission ID number, round-trip mileage, mission comments, and mission photos.

- ➔ For roundtrip mileage, include all miles of a round-trip even if the passenger was only on with you for part of the drive.
- ➔ We welcome any helpful suggestions you may have to assist us in serving you and our passengers better in the future. You can do this by making remarks in the comment section of the report.

If you do not file a mission report after repeated reminders, Uphaven will use an estimate of mileage based on the information we have.

If you have any questions or problems, please call the office and we would be glad to assist.

Note that you can view a list of the missions you have flown or that have been cancelled in the past, by clicking the “My Missions” link at the top of the page.

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 or smartphone.

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.) Even if permission has already been given, please ask before taking photos, as the family may not always be feeling up to it in the moment.

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.

Frequently Asked Questions

How does this all work?

1. The family submits a request (online, by phone, text, or email).
2. We process the request, making sure all the details are in place, eligibility is confirmed, and necessary waivers are collected.
3. We create a preliminary itinerary.
4. The itinerary is then shared with volunteers via the Volunteer Portal, email, phone, or text.
5. Volunteers can then choose to request the trip or not.
6. The coordination team finalizes the itinerary once a volunteer has requested it and notifies them that they've been officially assigned the trip.
7. The volunteer reaches out to the family to coordinate the details, with Uphaven here to help every step of the way.

How old do I need to be to drive with Uphaven?

Volunteer Drivers must be 18 years of age or older.

How often do I need to drive with Uphaven?

You can drive with Uphaven as often or as little as you'd like. It is entirely up to you.

What type of insurance do I need?

You'll need to show proof of insurance that meets your state's minimum requirements.
It's a good idea to let your insurer know you'll be driving with Uphaven to make sure you're fully covered—usually, your standard policy will do, but it's always good to confirm.
As an additional layer of protection, we require all family members to sign a comprehensive waiver before every trip.

How much notice do I get before a mission?

Family requests require 5-10 business days from when they're made to when the trip needs to happen, allowing us time to match the request with available pilots and drivers. If there's an urgent need, we'll do our best to accommodate with volunteers who can step in last-minute.

Letting us know your availability—through your application or the volunteer portal—helps us stay on top of things. Many families know their needs in advance or require routine care, so we can plan ahead and fill those trips more easily.

Bottom line: You're in control—choose the trips that work best for your schedule!

What does a typical trip entail?

All driving trips are connected to a flight leg. You'll either:

- ➔ Pick up passengers from one of the local airports (Milwaukee Mitchell, Timmerman, or Waukesha) and take them to their lodging or healthcare facility,
- ➔ Or pick them up from their lodging or healthcare facility and drive them to the airport for their return flight.

You won't have to wait for doctor's appointments. If a trip involves a doctor's visit and the family has a return flight later the same day, it will be treated as a separate leg. While you're welcome to request this trip as well, it may be handled by a different driver.

How big of a vehicle do I need?

Uphaven trips typically support 1-5 people, and this information will be included in the trip itinerary you reference before requesting one.

Most passengers will be arriving from or heading to a flight on a small aircraft (2-6 passengers, including the pilot). Weight is a key consideration—each person is allowed up to 25lbs of baggage, with a total max of 50lbs per family. Baggage must be soft-sided (e.g., duffle bags) to fit safely in a small aircraft. While exceptions may be made, they will be communicated well in advance, usually before you request the trip.

Occasionally, wheelchairs, car seats, or supplemental oxygen may need to be transported. Our goal is to avoid surprises, so you'll only manage what you're comfortable with and you'll never be forced to accept a circumstance with which you're not comfortable.

What about car seats?

Kids need to be in a car seat until they're 4 years old and 40 lbs, then can switch to a booster seat until they're 8, weigh over 80 lbs, or are taller than 4'9". Here's the breakdown:

- ➔ Under 1 year AND under 20 lbs: Rear-facing seat in the back (if available)
- ➔ 1 year+ and 20+ lbs, but under 4 years or 40 lbs: Forward-facing seat in the back (if available)
- ➔ 4-8 years, 40-80 lbs, and under 4'9": Booster in the back seat (if available)

Flying and driving have different regulations. For example, booster seats aren't allowed to be used on aircraft, so a child might not have the right seat for your vehicle. You'll need to

coordinate with the parent or guardian about what seat they'll have on the flight to ensure they're all set for the drive.

If a family does not have access to a legal, required car seat and you do, feel free to use it. If not, Uphaven is working on providing seats for trips. Reach out to us at operations@flyuphaven.org or call 414-207-4567 to check availability.

We are always looking for more car seats to support our mission. Please let us know if you'd like to donate towards this cause.

What if I'm a bit uncomfortable driving strangers?

Feeling this way is pretty common. Many drivers are most familiar with driving family and close friends, so driving new passengers can feel like a big step. If this is a concern, consider easing into it by starting as a Mission Assistant or teaming up with a more experienced driver for your first few missions. These smaller steps can help build your confidence and comfort.

Drivers often find these missions deeply rewarding. The immense gratitude from families and the heartfelt hugs you'll receive make the experience truly unforgettable. When you're ready, the impact you'll have is worth every moment.

How should I communicate with Uphaven staff and passengers?

Once you're signed up and accepted for an Uphaven mission, please:

- ➔ Reach out to the passenger(s) to introduce yourself, explain what they can expect, confirm weight/baggage details, and share logistical information (like where and when to meet).
- ➔ If you have trouble reaching them, contact the Coordination Team, and we'll step in to help connect you.

For mission changes, cancellations, or after-hours emergencies, call us at (414) 207-4567.

Should I sign up if the weather is uncertain?

Absolutely! We encourage pilots and drivers to sign up in advance. Families often have a backup plan or the ability to reschedule, and our Coordination Team ensures that contingencies are in place. Just keep us informed about any weather concerns as the mission date approaches, and we'll work together to adapt.

What's the deal with waivers and medical releases?

- ➔ Waiver of Liability: Uphaven secures an electronically signed, one-time waiver from passengers before their first mission. You don't need to worry about collecting this on-site.

- ➔ Medical Release: We also require an annual medical release from the child's healthcare provider, confirming they're stable and safe for non-pressurized flight.

All passengers listed on your Mission Itinerary that you receive after being assigned a mission have completed their waiver of liability and medical release. If the family shows up for a mission with an unlisted passenger, you can contact the Uphaven office to verify whether that person has a waiver on file and/or ask them complete one plane-side. We provide an online link for this purpose on all Mission Itineraries.

Can I share my Uphaven story on social media?

Yes, with permission! Sharing your experience helps us reach more volunteers, passengers, and supporters.

- ➔ Photos: Ask passengers for permission before posting flight pictures. Respect their privacy—many prefer to keep their medical details private.
- ➔ Tag us: @flyuphaven
- ➔ Submit photos: Share your mission highlights in your Mission Report, and we'll ensure photo releases are on file before posting.

Check out our Volunteer Communications, Internet & Social Media Policy for more tips!