

# EMPLOYER HANDBOOK

## 100 Welcome Message

Welcome to Sewa Senior Care!

We are thrilled to have you join our dedicated team of professionals. At Sewa Senior Care, we are committed to providing exceptional care and services to seniors in our community, helping them live comfortable, dignified, and joyful lives. Your role here is not just a job—it's an opportunity to make a real difference in the lives of others.

As you embark on your journey with us, we encourage you to embrace our core values of compassion, respect, and integrity. Our success is built on the collective hard work and dedication of our employees, and we believe that every team member plays a crucial role in achieving our mission.

We look forward to your contributions and are excited to see the positive impact you will make. Should you have any questions or need support, our doors are always open. Welcome aboard!

## 101 Company Overview

Founded with the vision of enhancing the lives of the elderly in our community, Sewa Senior Care has grown to become a leader in in-home senior care. We provide a wide range of services tailored to meet the unique needs of each client, ensuring their safety, wellbeing, and happiness.

### Our Mission:

Our mission at SEWA is to significantly improve the lives of seniors through compassionate and personalized in-home care services. We aim to foster independence, dignity, and overall well-being by providing services specifically designed to meet the individual needs of our clients. Our dedicated team is committed to creating a supportive and nurturing atmosphere that allows our seniors to age gracefully and enjoy a rich, fulfilling life in the familiar comfort of their own homes.

### Our Vision:

SEWA's vision is to become the foremost provider of in-home senior care services, known for our commitment to excellence in caregiving. We are driven to redefine the experience of aging in

place with innovative, holistic care solutions that allow seniors to embrace life's later years to their fullest potential. By prioritizing unwavering dedication, quality, and a personalized approach to care, we strive to be the top choice for families in need of superior in-home care services. Our ultimate ambition is to make a lasting, positive impact on the senior community, changing the way aging is experienced in the safety and security of their own homes.

## Our Values:

**Compassion:** We approach all aspects of our work with empathy and kindness.

**Respect:** We honor the dignity of every individual and celebrate the diversity within our community and our organization.

**Integrity:** We conduct ourselves with honesty and uphold the highest ethical standards.

At Sewa Senior Care, we believe that our employees are our greatest asset, and we are committed to providing a supportive and rewarding work environment. This Employee Handbook is designed to provide you with an overview of our policies, procedures, and the benefits available to you. We encourage you to read it thoroughly and refer back to it as you grow in your career with us.

Again, welcome to Sewa Senior Care. We are delighted to have you as part of our team, and we look forward to achieving great things together.

# 102 Handbook Purpose and Legal Framework

## 102A Purpose of This Handbook

Welcome to the Sewa Senior Care Employee Handbook. This manual is crafted specifically for our caregivers and serves as a foundational guide for the policies and procedures of our organization. It plays a crucial role in maintaining a consistent and equitable work environment and is subject to updates by Sewa Senior Care's leadership, who hold the authority to amend, modify, add, or remove content as needed. Decisions on the interpretation or implementation of these policies are made by our officers, directors, managers, and supervisors and are considered definitive and binding for all staff members.

The objectives of this handbook are threefold:

**To Inform:** This handbook is designed to introduce you to the operational practices and standards at Sewa Senior Care. It provides comprehensive details about our policies on

employment, workplace conduct, compensation, benefits, and safety protocols. Our aim is to ensure clarity on what you can expect from us and what we expect from you.

**To Guide:** More than just a list of rules and regulations, this handbook offers practical guidance on navigating various workplace situations. Whether you encounter everyday tasks or face unique challenges, this guide is here to help you perform your duties with efficacy and confidence.

**To Protect:** This handbook clearly outlines company policies and your rights as an employee, safeguarding both your interests and those of the organization. By ensuring policy transparency and consistency, it helps cultivate a just and respectful work environment for all.

We strongly encourage you to read this handbook thoroughly and use it as a reference point during your tenure at Sewa Senior Care. While this document is a valuable tool for understanding your role and responsibilities, it is not an employment contract but a guide to assist you throughout your employment journey.

Should you have any questions that this handbook does not address, please do not hesitate to reach out to your supervisor or the Human Resources department. We are here to support your success and are delighted to have you as part of our team!

## 102B Authority and Amendments

Any prior policies and procedures inconsistent with those outlined in this manual, whether verbal or written, are hereby revoked upon communication to the employees. It should be noted that while this manual provides essential guidelines, it does not encompass every conceivable scenario that may arise in day-to-day operations. Sewa Senior Care reserves the right to introduce additional policies or procedures as deemed necessary. In case of conflict with the manual, the provisions of this manual shall prevail unless expressly stated otherwise in writing.

## 102C Employment Relationship

This manual is for informational purposes only and does not establish an employment contract or any other contractual relationship between Sewa Senior Care and its employees, except as specified within a written employment contract or agreement. Both Sewa Senior Care and its employees maintain an "employment-at-will" relationship, meaning either party may terminate the employment relationship at any time, with or

without cause. In instances of discrepancy between a written employment agreement and this manual, the employment agreement shall govern.

## 102D Intellectual Property

All rights to this manual and its contents are the exclusive intellectual property of Sewa Senior Care. Unauthorized reproduction or use of any portion of this manual without prior written consent from Sewa Senior Care is strictly prohibited.

## 102E Effective Date

For brevity throughout this manual, Sewa Senior Care will be referred to as "SEWA," and various roles within the organization will be designated accordingly. The effective date of this manual's provisions is April 1, 2024, unless otherwise specified.

## 102F Compliance with Illinois Department of Human Rights (IDHR) Guidelines

All employees should recognize that the State of Illinois frequently changes and updates policies and procedures. For the latest policies and procedures, all employees should consult the latest changes online at the Illinois Department of Human Services website (IDHS: Illinois Department of Human Services ([state.il.us](http://state.il.us))) and for Human Rights policies, please refer to Human Rights ([illinois.gov](http://illinois.gov)).

### **Sewa Senior Care's Commitment to State Guidelines:**

In adherence to the Illinois Human Rights Act and to foster transparency and understanding of the rights under this Act, Sewa Senior Care ensures that all policies and procedures related to employment, discrimination, and harassment are in full compliance with the standards set forth by the Illinois Department of Human Rights (IDHR).

### **Key Aspects of the IDHR Guidelines Include:**

**Non-Discrimination:** Sewa Senior Care upholds the principle that all employees and applicants shall be treated equally without regard to race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, disability, sexual orientation, gender identity, or any other characteristic protected under the Illinois Human Rights Act.

**Sexual Harassment Prevention:** All employees are entitled to a workplace free from sexual harassment. The handbook outlines behaviors considered as sexual harassment, the process for handling complaints, and the disciplinary actions that may be taken against offenders.

**Reasonable Accommodations:** Sewa Senior Care is committed to providing reasonable accommodations for employees with disabilities and for religious practices, as required by law, to ensure equal employment opportunities.

**Filing a Charge:** Employees who believe they have been subjected to discrimination or harassment can file a charge with the Illinois Department of Human Rights. The handbook provides detailed instructions on how to file such a charge, including contact information for the IDHR.

**Posting Requirements:** Consistent with Section 2-102(K)(1) of the Illinois Human Rights Act, Sewa Senior Care ensures that notices summarizing the rights to be free from unlawful discrimination and sexual harassment, and rights to reasonable accommodations, are conspicuously posted at the workplace.

#### **Ensuring Awareness and Compliance:**

**Employee Training:** Regular training sessions are conducted to educate employees about their rights under the Illinois Human Rights Act, the contents of the IDHR notice, and the procedures for addressing grievances.

**Resources and Assistance:** Sewa Senior Care provides resources and contact information for the Illinois Department of Human Rights within the handbook and on the company intranet to assist employees in understanding and exercising their rights.

**Review and Update:** This section of the handbook and related policies are reviewed annually to ensure they remain up-to-date with any changes in the law or guidelines issued by the IDHR.

## **102G Commitment to a Fair Work Environment**

As part of our commitment to creating a fair and respectful work environment, Sewa Senior Care complies with Section 2-102(K)(1) of the Illinois Human Rights Act by ensuring that notices summarizing employees' rights to be free from unlawful discrimination and sexual harassment, and to certain reasonable accommodations, are conspicuously posted on the employer's premises. These notices are located where notices to employees are customarily posted and include information on how to file a charge of discrimination. This is part of our ongoing effort to inform our employees of their rights and the resources available to them.

## 200 EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY

### 201 AT-WILL EMPLOYMENT

Sewa Senior Care aims for a lasting and mutually beneficial relationship with each employee. However, recognizing the potential for evolving circumstances and career aspirations, both employees and Sewa Senior Care maintain the right to terminate employment at any time and for any reason. This at-will employment policy ensures flexibility to adapt to changing needs and directions within the organization.

### 202 EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY

Sewa Senior Care is dedicated to equal opportunity employment practices. We embrace diversity and adhere to a policy of hiring qualified individuals regardless of race, color, creed, religion, sex, sexual orientation, age, marital status, disability, national origin, ancestry, veteran's status, or any other protected category under federal, state, or local law. This policy applies across all facets of employment, including recruitment, selection, training, promotion, compensation, benefits, disciplinary actions, and termination.

We are committed to upholding the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and the Illinois Department of Human Rights (IDHR) to ensure fair employment opportunities for qualified individuals with disabilities. Discrimination or harassment based on any protected characteristic is strictly prohibited, and reasonable accommodations will be provided as required by law.

For Details, check Equal Employment Opportunity Policy

### 203 OPEN DOOR POLICY

At Sewa Senior Care, we value open communication and encourage employees to actively engage in discussions about workplace policies, procedures, and concerns. Our open-door policy fosters a positive work environment where employees feel empowered to address issues directly with management. We prioritize transparency and encourage employees to seek information and resolve conflicts through dialogue with their supervisors or HAHC Management.

### 204 EMPLOYMENT CATEGORIES

It is the intent of SEWA to clarify the definitions of employment classifications so that employees understand their employment status and benefits eligibility.

Each employee is designated as either EXEMPT or NONEXEMPT from federal and state wage and hour laws. NONEXEMPT employees are entitled to overtime pay under applicable provisions of federal and state laws. EXEMPT employees are excluded from minimum wage and overtime pay

provisions under federal and state wage and hour laws. An employee's EXEMPT or NONEXEMPT classification may be changed upon written notification by SEWA management.

All In-Home Services employees are nonexempt employees.

In addition to the above categories, each employee will belong to one other employment category:

**FULL TIME :** Full time employees are those who are regularly scheduled to work thirty (30) hours a week or more at SEWA's full-time schedule. Generally, they are eligible for SEWA's health insurance, dental, vision, sick leave benefits, subject to the terms, conditions, and limitations of each benefit program.

**PART-TIME:** Part Time employees are those who are regularly scheduled to work less than full-time work schedule, but at least 30 hours per week. Part-time employees are eligible for some benefits sponsored by SEWA, subject to the terms, conditions, and limitations of each benefit program.

## 205 ORIENTATION PROCESS

SEWA recognizes the importance of welcoming new hired employees and provides them with essential information about the organization. SEWA will conduct an Orientation Meeting with new employees typically during the first week of every month. The manager or Supervisor will conduct this session. The orientation will address the following:

- a. A summary of the new employee's role, history and organization of SEWA and its purpose.
- b. Inform the new employees of his/her expected responsibilities and review the job description.
- c. Ensure each new employee receives a copy of the Handbook. Every employee will receive a considerable amount of time to go through it and then to proceed to answer questions or concerns that might arise.
- d. Inform the new employees about the 4-hour pre-service training. Home Services employees must keep in mind that the workspace will be the client's home. The staff will accompany the new person hired to a workplace and train him/her on the job. That gives the opportunity of a 1-1 experience.
- e. Answer questions as required.

## 206 EMPLOYMENT APPLICATIONS

SEWA relies upon the accuracy of information contained in the employment applications, as well as the accuracy of other data presented throughout the hiring process and employment. Any misrepresentations, falsifications, or material omissions in any of this information or data may

result in the exclusion of the individual from further consideration for employment or, if the person has been hired, termination of employment.

## 207 PERFORMANCE EVALUATIONS

Caregivers undergo regular performance evaluations conducted by Supervisors in compliance with program requirements. Evaluations are based on direct observation of work performance and feedback from clients. However, it's important to note that continued employment following evaluations does not alter the at-will nature of employment at Sewa Senior Care.

## 208 DISMISSAL POLICIES AND DISCIPLINARY PRACTICES

Sewa Senior Care's disciplinary policy aims to correct improper behavior and enhance performance while safeguarding client interests. We employ progressive disciplinary procedures, providing employees with opportunities to address and rectify issues through open communication. The disciplinary process may include verbal warnings, written reprimands, suspensions, or termination, depending on the severity of the situation. It's crucial to understand that these steps are not exhaustive and do not constitute a contractual obligation. Sewa Senior Care maintains an at-will employment policy, allowing either party to terminate the employment relationship at any time, with or without cause and with or without prior notice.

## 209 JOB DESCRIPTION

Sewa Senior Care In-Home Service employee's priority is to take care of the senior clients in their homes. Pre-service and in-service training will be required for the employment. In-Home Services employees report directly to the department Manager or Supervisor.

### **Responsibilities:**

- a. Travel to client homes with public transportation or personal owned vehicles.
- b. House Cleaning, including kitchen, bathroom, and client's living areas/common areas.
- c. Plan, prepare, and serve meals for the client.
- d. Remind the client to take medication.
- e. Assist with transferring the client from bed, chair or toilet.
- f. Assist with bathing for the client.
- g. Assist with transporting and escorting the client to medical visits, including doctor and pharmacy visits
- h. Shop for groceries under client's requirement.
- i. Wash, sort, and put away the client's laundry with the use of a washing machine and dryer.
- j. Monitor client's daily activities, and report any unusual health conditions immediately.
- k. Remind client of his/her doctor appointment
- l. Assist in personalized care plan catered specifically for the client based on their individual needs.



- m. Provide companionship.
- n. Other duties, if assigned by CCU/MCO.

## 210 JOB ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

- a. **Effective Communication:** Must possess the ability to communicate effectively with both the client and Sewa Senior Care.
- b. **Language :** Must be fluent in English. While not required, it is definitely an added benefit to have a home care aide worker to be able to converse with the client in their own native language, so that they feel more comfortable and feel connected with the home care aide worker.
- c. **Adherence to Care Plans:** Capable of delivering covered Home Care services in accordance with the client's care plan and promptly addressing client needs.
- d. **Record Maintenance:** Responsible for maintaining accurate daily written records, including timesheets. However, it's crucial to note that Home Care Aides will not receive compensation for hours worked beyond those explicitly authorized in writing on the client's service plan without prior written permission from the supervisor.
- e. **Shared Care :** In exceptional cases, Home Care Aides may be required to service two to three clients in a shared setting.
- f. **Health Condition Reporting:** Tasked with identifying and promptly reporting any changes in the client's health condition to the supervisor.
- g. **Lifting :** Must be able to bend and lift 20lbs.
- h. **Age Requirement:** Home Care Aides aged 16 to 17 must undergo evaluation by a supervisor at least once every sixty (60) days. Furthermore, they are prohibited from working for any other Home Care Services while employed by Sewa Senior Care.

## 211 INELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

Home Care Aide's are Prohibited from Being:

- Paid legal guardians of an adult.
- Legal guardians of minors.
- Parents or stepparents of minor child recipients.
- Recipients of PCA services themselves.
- Responsible parties of recipients.
- Spouses of recipients.

## 300 EMPLOYEE RESPONSIBILITIES

### 301 DRESS CODE AND USE OF ELECTRONIC DEVICES

At Sewa Senior Care, we uphold a professional appearance standard for all employees while on duty. This expectation is crucial as our employees serve as visual representatives of our organization, contributing significantly to the professional image we aim to portray. Therefore, all employees are required to maintain a neat, professional, and well-groomed appearance during their working hours.

While we understand the prevalence of electronic devices in today's society, it is essential for employees to prioritize their professional responsibilities while at work. Therefore, employees must refrain from personal use of electronic devices, including mobile phones, tablets, laptops, and PDAs, while on duty. This policy extends to all work-related activities, including travel between client appointments.

### 302 CLIENT SAFETY AND PRIVACY

To ensure the safety, privacy, and quality of care for our clients, Caregivers are prohibited from bringing any individuals, including children and pets, to the client's home while on duty. This policy aims to maintain a professional environment and minimize potential distractions or disruptions to the caregiving process.

### 303 EMPLOYEE FILE MAINTENANCE

Sewa Senior Care maintains individual employee files at our office in Chicago, Illinois, to accurately record each employee's work history and current employment status. These files contain essential forms, documents, and correspondence relevant to the employee's employment with Sewa Senior Care. Employees are responsible for notifying Sewa Senior Care of any changes to their personal information to ensure accurate and up-to-date records.

### 304 CONFIDENTIALITY AND DISCLOSURE

While employees have the right to review their own employee files in the presence of the CEO or designated personnel, it's crucial to recognize that all information contained within these files is confidential. Sewa Senior Care cooperates with outside organizations by providing limited information about current and former employees, such as dates of employment and job titles, upon request. Any disclosure of additional information requires written consent from the employee or compliance with applicable laws.

### 305 SCHEDULE CHANGES AND TIME SUBMISSION

Employees are expected to adhere to their assigned schedules as determined during orientation with the Caregiver, Supervisor, and client. In the event of schedule changes or inability to work,

employees must notify the Supervisor and client as early as possible and obtain approval from all parties before making any adjustments. Additionally, Sewa Senior Care's payroll and timesheet submission policies are communicated to employees in writing and must be followed accordingly.

### **306 TRAVEL EXPENSES**

Sewa Senior Care does not provide mileage reimbursement for Caregivers for any work-related travel, including trips to and from their residence, between client locations, or to and from the Sewa Senior Care office.

### **307 TRAVEL TIME POLICY**

Caregivers authorized by Sewa Senior Care to serve multiple clients in a day will receive compensation for travel time between clients at their regular hourly rate. This is facilitated through the Caregiver Travel Documentation form. However, travel to the first client of the day or from the last client of the day is not reimbursed. Travel time must be approved by the Caregiver's Supervisor and documented alongside other activity records.

### **308 PCA SERVICE VERIFICATION POLICY**

Caregivers are required to include their and their client's phone numbers, along with the physical address where services will be rendered, on their timesheet for the following week. Unannounced calls are made quarterly by Sewa Senior Care to verify the presence of both PCA and client during service hours. If necessary, site visits are conducted to confirm service provision.

### **309 FINANCIAL RECORDS AND CONTROLS**

Sewa Senior Care maintains financial records in compliance with the law. Employees are responsible for accurately and honestly recording, reporting, and retaining information, without hiding, misrepresenting, or providing false information.

### **310 TRANSPORTATION OF CLIENTS**

Transportation of clients is prohibited by Sewa Senior Care and the Illinois Department of Human Services. Caregivers may assist clients during transport but are not allowed to drive client vehicles. Sewa Senior Care does not offer company vehicles or mileage reimbursement for client transportation.

### **311 WORK BREAKS / MEAL BREAKS**

Employees may take work breaks of up to fifteen minutes within every four-hour period and unpaid meal breaks of thirty to sixty minutes during shifts exceeding eight hours. Proper documentation of break times is required as per Sewa Senior Care's payroll and timesheet policies.

## 400 ETHICAL STANDARDS

Sewa Senior Care upholds the highest ethical standards in all business endeavors, surpassing legal requirements. We understand that trust from both our employees and the public is a significant responsibility. While it's impossible to cover every situation, this chapter outlines our ethical principles to guide all employees.

### 401 GENERAL GUIDELINES

Employees are personally accountable for maintaining the highest ethical standards and complying with relevant laws and regulations. Key principles include:

- Conducting business honestly, ethically, and in good faith, seeking guidance when unsure.
- Fully cooperating with investigations concerning personal or third-party conduct related to Sewa Senior Care.
- Complying with applicable laws, rules, and regulations and seeking guidance when needed.
- Prioritizing client quality of life in all actions.
- Reporting any violations of Sewa Senior Care policy or the law promptly and to the appropriate authorities.
- Promptly reporting any accusations of theft by clients to the Caregiver's Supervisor.
- Adhering to Sewa Senior Care's rules, regulations, and policies, including updates and revisions.
- Refraining from asking clients to sign incomplete timesheets or sign before work completion, as it constitutes poor judgment and may lead to disciplinary action.

### 402 SAFETY

Ensuring safety is paramount. Employees must:

- Prioritize safety in all actions.
- Understand and adhere to safety and health rules relevant to their responsibilities.
- Take precautions to protect colleagues, clients, and equipment from harm.
- Follow safe lifting techniques, including maintaining proper posture and never lifting with a twisted back.
- Report any accidents, injuries, hazards, or unsafe practices promptly.
- Refrain from possessing firearms or weapons on client premises or Sewa Senior Care property.
- Avoid retaliation or threats against those reporting safety concerns.

### 403 CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

Employees must avoid conflicts of interest that could reflect negatively on Sewa Senior Care by:

- Avoiding personal conflicts or the appearance thereof.
- Disclosing any client relationships that may pose a conflict of interest.

- Fulfilling job responsibilities impartially, regardless of personal interests.
- Refraining from exploiting Sewa Senior Care relationships for personal gain.
- Disclosing close personal relationships with supervisors or clients to management.
- Safeguarding and responsibly using Sewa Senior Care assets for legitimate business purposes.
- Not abusing or compromising employee benefits and privileges.
- Avoiding conduct, on or off duty, that harms fellow employees, clients, or Sewa Senior Care.

## 404 ALCOHOL AND ILLEGAL DRUG USE IN THE WORKPLACE

Sewa Senior Care maintains a drug-free workplace policy, prohibiting the use, possession, or influence of alcohol or illegal drugs while on duty or providing care to clients. Employees are subject to disciplinary action for violations, up to and including termination. Any convictions related to drug offenses must be reported promptly to the supervisor.

## 405 INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY RIGHTS

Sewa Senior Care retains all intellectual property rights, including patents, trademarks, and copyrights. Unauthorized use of such property is prohibited.

## 406 OFFENSIVE/HARASSING BEHAVIOR

Harassment of any kind, including sexual harassment, is strictly prohibited. Employees must report any incidents promptly, and Sewa Senior Care is committed to investigating and addressing complaints promptly and confidentially.

## 407 POLITICAL ACTIVITIES

Employees are free to participate in political activities on a personal level but must not use Sewa Senior Care's resources for political purposes. Sewa Senior Care does not support or endorse political candidates or campaigns.

## 408 WHISTLEBLOWER POLICY

Employees are encouraged to report any suspected violations of law or ethics without fear of retaliation. Sewa Senior Care prohibits any form of retaliation against whistleblowers and ensures confidentiality during investigations.

## 409 SECURITY OF TRANSMITTED INFORMATION

Employees must take precautions to safeguard confidential information when transmitting it electronically, including using secure methods for email and fax communications.

## 410 MEDIA/SOCIAL MEDIA

Recognizing the widespread use of social media as a means of personal expression, Sewa Senior Care acknowledges its potential for both enjoyment and risk. While caregivers may use social media to share their lives and opinions, they bear full responsibility for their online conduct.

**Professional Conduct:** Caregivers must refrain from online behavior that could negatively impact their job performance, the performance of colleagues, or the interests of Sewa Senior Care and its stakeholders. Posting discriminatory remarks, harassment, or threats may result in disciplinary action, including termination.

**Guidelines:** Sewa Senior Care provides clear guidelines for responsible social media use:

a. **Rule Adherence:** Caregivers must familiarize themselves with and adhere to company policies, including Ethical Standards, Confidential Information Policy, Nondiscrimination Policy, and Offensive & Harassing Behaviors Policy, ensuring that their posts align with these guidelines.

b. **Respect:** Employees are expected to treat colleagues, clients, and affiliated individuals with fairness and courtesy. Resolving work-related issues should be pursued directly rather than through social media. However, if posting complaints or criticism, caregivers must ensure compliance with company policies.

c. **Honesty and Accuracy:** Employees must always provide honest and accurate information online. Any mistakes should be promptly corrected, and altered posts should be disclosed. False information or rumors about Sewa Senior Care, its employees, clients, or competitors are strictly prohibited.

d. **Appropriate Content:** Caregivers should not represent themselves as spokespersons for Sewa Senior Care. When discussing company-related matters, employees must clarify that their views are personal and not representative of the organization.

e. **Work-Time Usage:** Social media should not be accessed during work hours.

f. **No Retaliation:** Retaliation against employees or clients for reporting policy violations or cooperating in investigations is forbidden and may result in disciplinary measures.

g. **Media Contacts:** Employees should refrain from speaking to the media on behalf of Sewa Senior Care without CEO approval. Media inquiries should be directed to the CEO.

Caregivers are encouraged to seek guidance from their supervisors for further clarification or assistance.

## 411 DIRECT MARKETING

Employees are prohibited from directly marketing Sewa Senior Care services to potential clients (or their guardians or family members) in person, by phone, by mail or electronic means. Only indirect marketing methods such as web sites, yellow page advertisements, billboards and newspaper advertising are permitted by law.

For further clarification or guidance, employees are encouraged to contact their supervisor.

## 412 CAREGIVER/CLIENT BOUNDARIES

The relationship between a caregiver and a client is defined by understood, unspoken boundaries that encompass both physical and emotional limits. These boundaries, rooted in professional and cultural norms, guide interactions between caregivers and clients, fostering trust and maintaining fairness in care provision.

While caregiving often fosters strong emotional connections, it's crucial to uphold clear boundaries to prevent misunderstandings or breaches of professionalism. Factors such as personality differences, mental health conditions, caregiver stress, and cultural nuances can contribute to boundary challenges.

Warning signs of boundary blurring include:

- Exchange of gifts between caregiver and client or their families.
- Clients seeking access to caregiver's personal contact information.
- Expectations for caregiving extending beyond professional settings.
- Caregiver oversharing personal information with clients or their families.

It's essential for caregivers to reflect on their interactions and consider:

- Consistency in treatment across all clients.
- Public perception of their actions.

- Personal emotions influencing decision-making.
- Genuine intention behind actions.
- Indicators of professional burnout.

Caregivers uncertain about boundary issues should seek guidance from their supervisor or management. Additionally, caregivers are expected to:

- Establish clear expectations with clients regarding their role, availability, and communication preferences.
- Decline gifts, cash, or favors from clients.
- Avoid using clients' electronic devices for personal purposes.
- Report any concerning behaviors from clients or their families.
- Address boundary breaches promptly, emphasizing the importance of maintaining a professional relationship and objectivity.

Caregivers experiencing difficulty maintaining boundaries are encouraged to seek professional counseling, with support available through supervisors or the office. Any manipulation, coercion, or abuse of clients for personal gain will result in disciplinary action, including termination.

## 413 DEPOSITIONS

Requests for depositions must be promptly forwarded to the CEO for assessment of appropriateness. The CEO or their designee may consult legal counsel as needed. If approved, employees will receive guidance on deposition preparation from the CEO or their designee.

## 414 PRIVACY / HIPAA POLICY

Employees are obligated to uphold client privacy rights and maintain the confidentiality and security of protected health information (PHI). PHI will only be handled in accordance with applicable laws/regulations and Sewa Senior Care's Notice of Privacy Practices.

Employees must adhere to HIPAA regulations and other relevant statutes, laws, and ordinances governing health information. Disclosure of PHI is permissible only for treatment, payment, or healthcare operations as outlined in Sewa Senior Care's Notice of Privacy Practices and applicable laws.



Upon termination, former employees must continue to safeguard client PHI and return any documents or media containing PHI to their supervisor. Unauthorized disclosure of PHI may result in civil and criminal actions, in addition to disciplinary measures, including termination.

## 415 DATA PRIVACY

Sewa Senior Care recognizes clients' rights to confidentiality and data privacy and requires employees to comply with its Data Privacy Policy. Non-compliance may result in civil and criminal actions, as well as disciplinary measures, up to and including termination.

Employees may access private data only when necessary for their job functions and must ensure confidentiality and data privacy in all exchanges. Any doubts regarding information sharing should be referred to the supervisor.

Upon termination, former employees must continue to protect client data and return any documents or media containing private data to their supervisor. Unauthorized disclosure of private data may result in disciplinary action, including termination.

## 416 CONFIDENTIAL INFORMATION

Employees have access to confidential information belonging to Sewa Senior Care and must maintain its integrity and confidentiality. Unauthorized disclosure of confidential information is grounds for disciplinary action, including termination.

Requests for information must be directed to the CEO, who is the sole authorized individual to release such information. Media inquiries should also be directed to the CEO.

Employees agree that all confidential information pertaining to Sewa Senior Care, its clients, or employees is exclusive property and must not be disclosed except in the course of their duties.

## 417 REPORTING OF ABUSE/NEGLECT/EXPLOITATION

Sewa Senior Care complies with all relevant laws regarding the mandatory reporting of suspicions of abuse or neglect. Employees witnessing abuse or neglect must report it to the CEO or designee promptly, within 24 hours.

Employees must comply with Sewa Senior Care's Maltreatment of Vulnerable Adults Mandated Reporting Policy, reporting suspected maltreatment immediately. Failure to comply may result in disciplinary action, including termination.

## 418 VULNERABLE ADULT MANDATORY REPORTING

Sewa Senior Care is committed to protecting vulnerable adults and requires reporting of suspected maltreatment. Mandated reporters must report suspected maltreatment immediately or within 24 hours, as required by law.

Failure to report suspected maltreatment may result in disciplinary action, including termination.

## 419 VULNERABLE MINOR MANDATORY REPORTING

Sewa Senior Care prioritizes the protection of minor children and mandates the reporting of suspected abuse or neglect. Employees must comply with reporting requirements and failure to do so may result in disciplinary action, including termination.

Employees are required to report suspected abuse or neglect immediately, following specific reporting protocols outlined by Sewa Senior Care. Failure to report may lead to legal consequences and termination of employment.

## 500 EMPLOYEE WAGES & BENEFITS

### 501 WAGES

- General Policy: Sewa Senior Care is committed to providing competitive wages to attract and retain qualified employees. Wage ranges are determined based on industry standards, job complexity, employee experience, and market conditions.

- Home Care Aides: Recognizing the essential services provided by our home care aides, Sewa Senior Care has established a wage range of \$17 to \$19 per hour for these positions. This range is reflective of our commitment to fair compensation and may be adjusted periodically to remain competitive and fair.

## 502 WAGE DETERMINATION FACTORS

Employee wages within the specified range are determined based on a combination of factors, including but not limited to:

- Level of experience and qualifications
- Length of service with Sewa Senior Care
- Performance evaluations
- Specific job duties and responsibilities

## 503 Adjustments, Reviews and Compliance

- Wage ranges and individual compensation rates are reviewed annually and may be adjusted to reflect changes in market conditions, company performance, and individual employee contributions.
- Employees will be notified in writing of any changes to their wages or the overall wage policy.
- Sewa Senior Care is dedicated to adhering to all federal, state, and local wage laws and regulations. This policy will be reviewed regularly to ensure compliance and best practices in compensation.

## 504 BENEFITS

SEWA Offers several benefits to its employees. If an employee works more than 30 hours a week, they will be entitled to health insurance. The ability to offer benefits are based on the resources of SEWA and benefits may changed based on our budget. Human Resources can provide you a description of the benefits currently being offered.

The following benefit plans are available to eligible employees:

- FMLA : Family Medical Leave Act
- Bereavement Leave
- Holidays
- Health Insurance
- Dental Insurance
- Vision Insurance
- Jury Duty Leave
- Personal leave
- Pregnancy Leave
- Sick Leave

- Workers Compensation Insurance

## 505 FMLA: Family Medical Leave Act

Eligibility: Employees who have worked for SEWA for a total of 12 months and have worked at least 1250 hours during the previous 12 months are eligible for FMLA leave. Our agency measures the 12 months based on a rolling 12 month period measured backward from the first day an employee uses FMLA.

Leave will be administered in accordance with the Family and Medical Leave Act.

Eligible employees are entitled to upto 12 weeks of unpaid leave. Employees are encouraged to use available paid leave such as vacation, sick leave, and personal days concurrent with an FMLA Leave. After such paid time is exhausted, any further leave time under this policy will be unpaid.

Leave will be granted for the following reasons:

- a. For incapacity due to pregnancy, prenatal medical care or child birth;
- b. To care for the employer's child after birth, or placement for adoption or foster care;
- c. To care for the employee's spouse, domestic partner, son or daughter, or parent who has a serious health condition. This includes a foster child, step child or adopted child, as long as the child is under 18 years of age or is 18 years of age or older and incapable of self-care because of a mental or physical disability.
- d. For a serious health condition that makes the employee unable to perform the functions of their job;
- e. For qualifying exigencies related to the foreign deployment of a military member who is the employee's spouse, child, or parent.

Employees must provide 30 days advance notice of the need to take FMLA leave when the need is foreseeable. When 30 days notice is not possible, the employee must provide notice as soon as practicable and generally must comply with an employer's normal call-in procedures.

Employees will be required to provide sufficient information for the employer to determine if the leave may qualify for FMLA protection and the anticipated timing and duration of the leave. Sufficient information may include that the employee is unable to perform job functions, the family member is unable to perform daily activities, the need for hospitalization, or circumstances supporting the need for military family leave. Employees may also be required to provide certification and periodic recertification supporting the need for leave.

Upon return from FMLA leave, an employee will be restored to their original job or to an equivalent job with equivalent pay, benefits, and other employment terms and conditions. The use of FMLA leave cannot result in the loss of any employment benefit that the employee earned or was entitled to before using FMLA leave.

It is unlawful for any employer to interfere with, restrain, or deny the exercise of any right provided under FMLA. It is also unlawful for an employer to discharge or discriminate against any person for opposing any practice made unlawful by FMLA or for involvement in any proceeding under or relating to FMLA.

This policy will be administered in accordance with the FMLA and applicable state leave laws. Employees with questions about their FMLA rights are encouraged to contact their HR representative.

## 506 BEREAVEMENT LEAVE

Sewa Senior Care recognizes the importance of providing employees with time to grieve in the event of a death in the family. This Bereavement Leave Policy is established to offer support and necessary time off for employees during these difficult periods.

All employees of Sewa Senior Care are eligible for bereavement leave.

Eligible employees are entitled to up to three (3) days of paid bereavement leave in the event of the death of an immediate family member. Immediate family members are defined as the employee's spouse, domestic partner, parents, in-laws, children, siblings, grandparents, and grandchildren.

Extended Leave:

In situations where additional time is needed for travel or funeral arrangements, employees may request additional leave. Such requests will be considered on a case-by-case basis and may be granted as unpaid leave or the employee may choose to use available vacation or personal leave.

Notification and Documentation:

Employees should notify their supervisor of their need for bereavement leave as soon as possible. While Sewa Senior Care does not typically require documentation, we reserve the right to request documentation (e.g., a death certificate or obituary) to support the request for leave.

Return to Work:

Employees are expected to return to work following the conclusion of their bereavement leave. If additional time off is required, employees should discuss their situation with their supervisor or the Human Resources department to explore available options.

## 507 HOLIDAYS

To outline the policy regarding holiday observance and compensation for all employees of Sewa Senior Care. This policy ensures that employees are aware of their benefits related to holiday leave and pay, promoting a healthy work-life balance and acknowledging the importance of holidays in the lives of our employees.

This policy applies to all full-time and part-time employees of Sewa Senior Care.

Recognized Holidays:

Sewa Senior Care observes the following holidays each year, during which our offices will be closed:

- New Year's Day (January 1)
- Memorial Day (Last Monday in May)

- Independence Day (July 4)
- Labor Day (First Monday in September)
- Thanksgiving Day (Fourth Thursday in November)
- Christmas Day (December 25)

Additional holidays may be recognized and announced at the discretion of Sewa Senior Care management.

#### Holiday Pay for Full-time Employees:

Full-time employees are eligible for paid time off on the recognized holidays listed above. Employees scheduled to work on a recognized holiday will receive holiday pay at a rate of 1.5 times their regular hourly rate for all hours worked on the holiday.

#### Part-time Employees:

Part-time employees are not eligible for paid holidays. However, if a part-time employee is required to work on a recognized holiday, they will receive pay at a rate of 1.5 times their regular hourly rate for all hours worked on the holiday.

#### Eligibility:

To be eligible for holiday pay, full-time employees must have completed their probationary period and must work their scheduled day before and after the holiday, unless absence is approved by their supervisor or covered under FMLA or other applicable leave laws.

#### Holiday During Leave:

If a recognized holiday falls during an employee's scheduled vacation or leave of absence, the day will be counted as a holiday rather than a vacation or leave day.

#### Floating Holidays:

Sewa Senior Care recognizes the diversity of its employees and the importance of cultural and personal holidays. Therefore, full-time employees are also entitled to one (1) floating holiday per year to be used at their discretion, subject to approval by their supervisor. The request for a floating holiday should be submitted at least two weeks in advance.

#### Administration:

This policy will be administered by the Human Resources Department and is subject to change at the discretion of Sewa Senior Care management. Any modifications to this policy will be communicated to all employees.

## 508 WORKERS COMPENSATION INSURANCE

SEWA provides a comprehensive workers' compensation insurance program at no cost to employees. This program covers any injury sustained in the course of employment that requires medical, surgical, or hospital treatment. Subject to applicable legal requirements, workers' compensation insurance provides benefits if the employee is hospitalized immediately.

Employees who sustain work-related injuries or illnesses should inform their supervisor immediately. No matter how minor an on-the-job injury may appear, it is important that it is reported immediately. This will enable an eligible employee to qualify for coverage as quickly as possible.

Neither SEWA nor the insurance carrier will be liable for the payment of workers' compensation benefits for injuries that occur during an employee's voluntary participation in any off-duty recreational, social, or athletic activity sponsored by SEWA.

## 509 JURY DUTY

SEWA encourages employees to fulfill their civic responsibilities by serving jury duty when required. Employees served with a summons for jury duty and not legally disqualified from serving on a jury will be given time off from employment for jury service. Jury duty leave will be unpaid.

Employees must show the jury duty summons to their supervisor as soon as possible so that the supervisor may make arrangements to accommodate their absence. Of course, employees are expected to report for work whenever the court schedule permits.

Either SEWA or the employee may request an excuse from jury duty, if in SEWA's judgement, the employee's absence would impose an undue hardship on SEWA and/or the employee.

## 510 TIME OFF TO VOTE

SEWA encourages employees to fulfill their civic responsibilities by participating in elections. Generally employees are able to find time to vote either before or after their regular work schedule. If employees are unable to vote in an election during their nonworking hours, SEWA will grant up to two hours of paid time off to vote.

Employees should request time off to vote from their supervisor at least two working days prior to the Election Day. Advance notice is required so that the necessary time off can be scheduled at the beginning or end of the workday, in order to cause minimal disruption to the normal work schedule.

## 511 HEALTH INSURANCE

SEWA's health insurance plan provides eligible employees and their dependents access to medical and dental insurance benefits.

**Eligibility:** Full Time Employees who have worked for SEWA for a total of 12 months and have worked at least 1250 hours during the previous 12 months are eligible for Health insurance plan. Our agency measures the 12 months based on a rolling 12 month period measured backward from the first day an employee is eligible for the health plan. However, this policy may be subjected to change in future. Details of the health insurance plan are described in the Summary Plan Description (SPD). An SPD and information on cost of coverage will be provided in advance of enrollment to eligible employees.

## 512 SICK LEAVE BENEFITS

### **Eligibility**

Full Time Employees who have worked for SEWA for a total of 12 months and have worked at least 1250 hours during the previous 12 months are eligible for Sick Leave. Our agency measures the 12 months based on a rolling 12 month period measured backward from the first day an employee is eligible for the sick leave.

### **Accrual and Usage**

Employees will accrue sick leave at a rate of 1 hour for every 40 hrs worked, not exceeding to a maximum of 7 days per calendar year.

Unused sick leave cannot be carried over into the next year.

Sick leave can be used for:

Personal illness or injury.

Medical appointments, including preventive care.

Caring for an ill family member.

Mental health days.

### **Notification**

Employees are required to notify their supervisor as soon as possible, before their scheduled shift, if they are unable to work due to illness.

If the absence is foreseeable, as in the case of scheduled medical appointments, employees should provide notice at least 7 days in advance.

Documentation

For sick leave exceeding 3 consecutive days, a medical certificate may be required to validate the leave.

SEWA reserves the right to request a medical certificate for sick leave absences at its discretion.

### **Pay**

Sick leave is compensated at the employee's regular pay rate. Sick leaves are unpaid.

### **Return to Work**

Upon returning to work after an extended period of sick leave, employees may be required to meet with their supervisor to discuss any needed accommodations or a gradual return to work plan.

## **513 VACATION POLICY**

### **Eligibility**

Full Time Employees who have worked for SEWA for a total of 12 months and have worked at least 1250 hours during the previous 12 months are eligible for paid vacations. Our agency measures the 12 months based on a rolling 12 month period measured backward from the first day an employee is eligible for paid vacations.

### **Accrual and Entitlement**

Employees accrue vacation time at a rate determined by their length of service with SEWA. For example:

0–2 years of service: 10 days per year.

3–5 years of service: 15 days per year.

6+ years of service: 20 days per year.



Vacation time accrued monthly and is available for use at the beginning of the following month. Unused vacation time may be carried over into the next year up to a maximum of 5 days. Any unused vacation time beyond this will be forfeited unless otherwise specified by local labor laws.

**Scheduling Vacation:** Employees are required to submit vacation requests to their supervisor or the HR department at least two weeks in advance.

Vacation requests will be approved based on operational needs and on a first-come, first-served basis.

SEWA reserves the right to designate certain blackout periods during which vacation cannot be taken due to operational demands.

**Vacation Pay:** Vacation time is compensated at the employee's regular pay rate.

**Vacation upon Termination:** Upon termination of employment, employees will be paid for any accrued but unused vacation time, in accordance with local labor laws.

**Procedure for Requesting Vacation**

- Submit a vacation request form to your supervisor or the HR department.
- Wait for approval before making any definitive travel arrangements.
- Once approved, coordinate with your supervisor to ensure coverage during your absence.

## 600 SEXUAL HARASSMENT AND RETALIATION

### 601 Purpose:

Sewa Senior Care is committed to providing a workplace free from sexual harassment and retaliation. This policy outlines our procedures for addressing complaints of sexual harassment and retaliation, ensuring all employees understand their rights and responsibilities under the Illinois Human Rights Act.

As part of our commitment to creating a fair and respectful work environment, Sewa Senior Care complies with Section 2-102(K)(1) of the Illinois Human Rights Act by ensuring that notices summarizing employees' rights to be free from unlawful discrimination and sexual harassment, and to certain reasonable accommodations, are conspicuously posted on the employer's premises. These notices are located where notices to employees are customarily posted and include information on how to file a charge of discrimination. This is part of our ongoing effort to inform our employees of their rights and the resources available to them."

## 602 Scope:

This policy applies to all employees, applicants for employment, interns (both paid and unpaid), contractors, and persons conducting business with Sewa Senior Care, regardless of their position or the nature of their contract.

## Policy:

### 603A Prohibition of Sexual Harassment:

Definition: Sexual harassment constitutes any unwanted sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, or any visual, verbal, or physical conduct of a sexual nature when:

Submission to such conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of an individual's employment.

Submission to or rejection of such conduct by an individual is used as the basis for employment decisions affecting such individual.

Such conduct has the purpose or effect of substantially interfering with an individual's work performance or creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive working environment.

Examples: Examples include, but are not limited to, lewd comments, sexual jokes, unwanted touching or assault, displaying sexually explicit images, and other visual or physical conduct of a sexual nature.

### 603B Prohibition of Retaliation:

Protection: No employee shall be subject to retaliation for making a good faith complaint of sexual harassment or for participating in an investigation, proceeding, or hearing regarding such a complaint.

Acts of Retaliation: Retaliation includes, but is not limited to, employment actions affecting salary, promotion, job duties, work schedules, and other conditions of employment or career development.

### 603C Complaint Procedure:

Immediate Reporting: Employees who believe they have been sexually harassed or retaliated against are encouraged to report such incidents immediately to their supervisor, Human Resources, or any member of management they feel comfortable approaching.

Investigation Process: Upon receiving a complaint, Sewa Senior Care will promptly and thoroughly investigate the matter, ensuring fairness and confidentiality to the extent possible. The investigation will be conducted in accordance with our established procedures, which include interviews with both the complainant and the accused, as well as any witnesses.

Resolution: If the investigation confirms that sexual harassment or retaliation has occurred, Sewa Senior Care will take effective remedial action commensurate with the severity of the offense. This may include counseling, training, disciplinary action up to and including termination of the offender, and/or any other steps necessary to stop the harassment and prevent its recurrence.

## 603D Training and Communication:

**Training:** Sewa Senior Care is committed to providing comprehensive sexual harassment prevention training to all employees on a periodic basis, adhering to the requirements set forth under Section 109(B) of the Illinois Human Rights Act. As part of this commitment, we utilize the model sexual harassment prevention training program published on the Department's website. This training is mandatory for all employees and must be completed annually to ensure everyone is informed about their rights and responsibilities regarding preventing and addressing sexual harassment in the workplace.

**Initial Training for New Employees:** All new hires are required to complete the sexual harassment prevention training within their first 30 days of employment. This initiation into our workplace culture underscores our zero-tolerance policy towards sexual harassment.

**Annual Refresher Training:** Every employee at Sewa Senior Care must undergo annual refresher training to keep abreast of any changes in the law and to reinforce the importance of a harassment-free workplace.

**Specialized Training for Supervisors and Managers:** Supervisors and managers receive additional specialized training that focuses on recognizing signs of sexual harassment, handling reports of harassment effectively, and ensuring that they fulfill their legal and ethical responsibilities to prevent and address harassment within their teams.

**Communication:** The details of this training, including its scheduling and compliance requirements, are clearly communicated to all employees upon hiring and at regular intervals throughout the year. This policy is openly posted in common areas and is also available on the company website and intranet to ensure easy access for all staff members.

## 603E Responsibility and Enforcement:

**Human Resources Department:** The HR department holds the responsibility of ensuring that all training sessions are conducted as per the guidelines and that all employees, including new hires, complete the training in a timely manner. The HR department also maintains records of completed trainings to ensure compliance and readiness for any audits by state regulators.

## 603F Documentation and Record-Keeping:

Tracking Completion: A record of all employees who have completed the required training is maintained by the Human Resources department. These records are kept for a minimum duration as specified by state law to ensure that there is proof of compliance should it be required during inspections or legal proceedings.

Certification of Completion: Employees are provided with a certificate or digital badge upon the completion of their training which can be added to their personnel files.

### 603G Responsibility for Implementation and Monitoring:

Human Resources Department: The HR department is responsible for the implementation, administration, and monitoring of this policy. This includes maintaining records of complaints and their resolution, and providing ongoing support for compliance with this policy and the Illinois Human Rights Act.

## Employee Handbook Acknowledgment Form

### Employee Information:

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Position: \_\_\_\_\_

Department: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

### Acknowledgment:

I, \_\_\_\_\_ [Employee's Name], hereby acknowledge that I have received and read a copy of the Sewa Senior Care Employee Handbook. I understand that this handbook contains important information about the company's policies, procedures, and the terms and conditions of my employment.

I agree to abide by the rules, policies, and expectations outlined in the Employee Handbook and understand that these are guidelines for the conduct expected of me as an employee of Sewa Senior Care. I acknowledge that the policies described in this handbook are intended to apply to all employees of Sewa Senior Care.

I understand that the Employee Handbook is not a contract of employment and should not be deemed as such. I also understand that my employment is at-will, which means either I or Sewa Senior Care can terminate the employment relationship at any time, with or without cause or notice.

I am aware that Sewa Senior Care reserves the right to modify, rescind, or revise any policy, benefit, or provision described in the Employee Handbook, except for the policy of at-will employment, and that any such changes may occur without prior notice to employees.

I understand that it is my responsibility to read and familiarize myself with the contents of the Employee Handbook. If I have any questions regarding its contents, I will seek clarification from the Human Resources department.

Employee Signature:

Date:

**For Office Use Only**

Received by:

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Position: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_