Environmental Safety & Home Condition Policy

PRN-53: **Environmental Safety & Home Condition Policy**
Company Name: AI Auto-Tech Ltd
Trading/Business Name: CAREHOPES
Company Registration Number: 15556946
SIC Code: 88100 – Social Work Activities Without Accommodation for the Elderly and Disabled
Email: admin@carehopes.com
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1. Introduction

Environmental safety is a core safeguarding requirement within CAREHOPES (TC). Clients may live alone, experience mobility challenges, or have health conditions that increase vulnerability to environmental hazards. Companions play a vital role in identifying risks, documenting concerns, and ensuring that clients remain safe within their homes.

This policy establishes the standards, procedures, and reporting requirements for assessing home conditions and environmental safety during companionship sessions.

2. Purpose of the Policy

The purpose of this policy is to:

- ensure client homes are safe and free from hazards
- establish environmental assessment procedures
- identify signs of neglect or deterioration
- support safeguarding and wellbeing
- standardise documentation and reporting
- protect companions and clients from environmental risk
- ensure early intervention when hazards are identified

3. Scope

This policy applies to:

- companions
- volunteers

- staff assigned to home-based companionship
- supervisors overseeing environmental safety reporting

4. Definitions

4.1. Environmental Safety

The condition of a client's home environment, including hygiene, structural safety, utilities, and potential hazards.

4.2. Home Condition Assessment

A structured evaluation of the client's living environment to identify risks, neglect, or safeguarding concerns.

4.3. Hazard

Any environmental factor that may cause harm, including trip hazards, unsafe heating, clutter, or poor hygiene.

4.4. Neglect Indicators

Signs suggesting the client may be unable to maintain their home or personal environment safely.

5. Roles & Responsibilities

5.1. Companion Responsibilities

Companions must:

- conduct environmental assessments during visits
- identify hazards and risks
- document findings accurately
- escalate concerns immediately
- maintain professional boundaries
- avoid performing cleaning or maintenance tasks
- ensure client dignity and respect

5.2. Supervisor Responsibilities

Supervisors must:

- review environmental safety reports
- respond to escalations

- coordinate safeguarding interventions
- ensure companions receive training
- enforce compliance with this policy

6. Environmental Safety Assessment Areas

Companions must assess the following areas during each visit:

6.1. Hygiene & Cleanliness

Companions must observe:

- general cleanliness of the home
- kitchen hygiene (surfaces, dishes, food storage)
- bathroom hygiene (toilets, sinks, bathing areas)
- presence of pests or infestations
- odours indicating poor hygiene

Signs of severe hygiene issues must be escalated immediately.

6.2. Clutter & Trip Hazards

Companions must check for:

- loose items on the floor
- obstructed walkways
- unstable furniture
- unsafe rugs or mats
- excessive clutter
- items blocking emergency exits

Trip hazards pose significant risk for clients with mobility challenges.

6.3. Water Supply

Companions must confirm:

- access to clean drinking water
- functioning taps
- absence of leaks
- no signs of water contamination

- no flooding or dampness

Water supply issues must be escalated promptly.

6.4. Heating & Ventilation

Companions must assess:

- adequate heating
- safe heating sources
- functioning radiators or heaters
- ventilation in living areas
- signs of mould or damp
- overheating risks

Unsafe heating sources (e.g., faulty heaters) must be reported immediately.

6.5. Structural & Environmental Safety

Companions must observe:

- broken windows
- damaged doors
- unsafe flooring
- electrical hazards
- exposed wiring
- malfunctioning appliances

These issues may require urgent intervention.

6.6. Signs of Neglect

Companions must identify:

- spoiled food
- unpaid bills
- lack of basic supplies
- hoarding behaviour
- isolation indicators
- inability to maintain home environment

Neglect may be unintentional or due to cognitive decline.

6.7. Safeguarding Risks

Companions must look for:

- signs of abuse
- unexplained injuries
- unsafe visitors
- financial exploitation indicators
- environmental hazards that pose immediate danger

Safeguarding concerns must be escalated immediately.

7. Professional Boundaries

Companions must not:

- perform cleaning tasks
- repair appliances
- move heavy furniture
- dispose of client belongings
- reorganise the home without consent
- provide personal care
- handle client finances

Companions may **guide** clients on improving safety but must not perform domestic labour.

8. Documentation Requirements

8.1. Environmental Safety Report

Companions must document:

- hazards identified
- hygiene concerns
- structural issues
- heating or water problems
- signs of neglect

- safeguarding risks

Reports must be factual, objective, and submitted immediately after the visit.

8.2. Incident Reports

If a hazard poses immediate danger, companions must:

- complete an incident report
- notify TC immediately
- escalate to safeguarding if required

8.3. Photo Documentation

Photos may be taken **only with written consent** under Policy 75.

9. Escalation Procedures

9.1. Immediate Hazards

Companions must escalate:

- fire risks
- electrical hazards
- water leaks
- heating failure
- infestations
- structural damage

9.2. Safeguarding Concerns

Companions must escalate:

- neglect
- abuse
- exploitation
- unsafe visitors
- environmental conditions posing harm

9.3. Health-Related Concerns

Companions must escalate:

- signs of illness

- mobility deterioration
- inability to maintain hygiene
- confusion or cognitive decline

Escalations must be made to:

- TC Safeguarding Team
- emergency services (if required)
- client's designated contact

10. Legal & Regulatory Compliance

This policy aligns with:

- UK safeguarding legislation
- Care Act 2014
- Data Protection Act 2018
- UK GDPR
- TC Confidentiality Policy
- TC Digital Security Policy

Companions must comply with all legal and organisational requirements.

11. Disciplinary Consequences

Non-compliance may result in:

- retraining
- formal warnings
- suspension
- removal from client assignments
- termination
- safeguarding escalation
- legal referral

Failure to report hazards or safeguarding concerns is treated as **serious misconduct**.

12. Amendments

TC may update this policy to reflect:

- legal changes
- safeguarding updates
- operational improvements
- governance decisions

Updates will be communicated through official TC channels.