

SAUNDERS COUNTY PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION PASSENGER HANDBOOK



SAUNDERS COUNTY PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of Saunders County Public Transportation is to provide safe, reliable, and affordable transportation to the residents of Saunders County.

SAUNDERS COUNTY PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION GOALS OF PASSENGER HANDBOOK

Saunders County Public Transportation is a transportation service provider for Saunders County. This service has a set of policies and procedures that passengers are required to follow. It is to the benefit of all passengers that all policies and procedures outlined in this handbook are followed.

All policies will be enforced in a consistent and fair manner. If passengers perceive they have been treated unfairly, they have the option of filing a complaint with Saunders County Public Transportation as outlined on Page 10.

DESCRIPTION OF SERVICE

In the last 30 to 40 years, our country has become so dependent on the private automobile that the intercity passenger transportation systems like the railroad and larger bus lines no longer serve the transportation requirements of people living in rural areas. This has particularly harmed older persons who either cannot, or choose for good reasons, not to own or drive a private automobile. Also, the higher cost of driving one's own automobile plus inflation eating away at a retired person's fixed income or savings, have forced many to discontinue use of their cars. But these people still need to get to the doctor, do business, and shop for groceries if they want to remain in their own homes. Services provided by Saunders County Public Transportation allow this to happen.

Saunders County Public Transportation provides public transportation services to residents of Saunders County. Transportation includes destinations to all Saunders County areas, as well as transportation to Omaha, Lincoln, and Fremont on specified days.

SERVICE AREA

Services are provided in the following areas:

Ashland, Cedar Bluffs, Ceresco, Colon, Ithaca, Leshara, Malmo, Mead, Memphis, Morse Bluff, Plasi, Prague, Swedeburg, Touhy, Valparaiso, Wahoo, Wann, Weston, and Yutan.

SAUNDERS COUNTY PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION DAYS AND HOURS OF SERVICE

Saunders County Public Transportation will operate Monday through Friday each week of the year except on legally recognized holidays observed by the County as listed below.

Van Hours: Monday – Friday, 8:00 a.m. – 4:15 p.m.

Office Hours: Monday – Friday, 8:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

Public transportation services are not provided on the following holiday

New Year's Day, Martin Luther King Day, Presidents Day, Memorial Day, Independence Day, Labor Day, Columbus Day, Veterans Day, Thanksgiving Day, Day Following Thanksgiving Day, Christmas Eve Day, and Christmas Day.

ROUTE SCHEDULE

Saunders County Public Transportation provides a calendar showing the route schedule.

Mondays: Service Alternates

One Monday – Ashland, Ithaca, Wann, Memphis, and Ceresco

Alternate Monday – Mead, Yutan, and Leshara

Tuesdays: Trips to Fremont, Lincoln, and Omaha – Rotating equally between the three cities

Wednesday: Service Alternates

One Wednesday – Prague, Weston, Valparaiso, Malmo, and Touhy

Alternate Wednesday – Cedar Bluffs, Colon, and Morse Bluff

Thursday: Trips to Fremont, Lincoln, and Omaha – Rotating equally between the three cities

Friday: Wahoo Only

FEE SCALE

\$1.00 boarding or \$2.00 per round trip for travel within the same town in county

\$2.00 boarding or \$4.00 per round trip for travel from town to town in county

\$4.00 boarding or \$8.00 per round trip for travel out of county trip (Omaha/Lincoln/Fremont)

A charge of \$1.00 applies for each additional stop

These fares, approved by Saunders County Board of Supervisors, are effective July 1, 2010.

Residents of Saunders County will not be charged a fee when using Saunders County Public Transportation for transportation to the Saunders Medical Center for medical services. These fees are paid by Saunders Medical Center.

It will also be the policy for the Saunders County Public Transportation system to utilize all available financial resources to assist eligible persons to continue paying according to the above policy by tapping any/all appropriate funds for paying the actual trip cost.

Tickets may be purchased in person at the Saunders County Public Transportation office or by mailing payment to: Saunders County Public Transportation, 426 N. Broadway, Wahoo, Nebraska 68066. You may also pay by cash or check when boarding. If paying by cash, please have exact dollar amount.

SERVICE TYPES / TRIP NEEDS

Public Transportation service is provided for medical appointments, shopping, conducting personal business, visiting others, etc.

In order for Saunders County Public Transportation to keep the cost of operating at a minimum, there is a need of establishing a fair and just “trip needs” policy. It shall be the discretion of the Saunders County Public Transportation staff to determine if certain trips will be made. There may be the need to cancel some trips and reschedule for another, more appropriate time. This usually would result from bad weather conditions. The Van usually spends five hours in the town on the out-of-county trips. This, of course, could change due to circumstances beyond our control, such as doctors being late, weather turning bad, etc. You may not always get your full allotted time (someone feels ill, etc.) or you may have to stay longer than you planned.

REGISTRATION PROCEDURES

It is the policy of Saunders County Public Transportation that eligible persons need to be registered. When registering, the following information will be needed:

1. Passenger Name
2. Spouse Name (if applicable)
3. Address (directions if needed)
4. Phone Number
5. Date of Birth/Age
6. Emergency Contact Information
7. Any Special Transportation Needs (ex. walker, wheelchair, etc.)
8. Escort, (if applicable), and Name of the Escort

RESERVATION PROCEDURES

In order for Saunders County Public Transportation system and its employees to handle the complexity of scheduling door-to-door transportation county wide, it is necessary that a procedure for reserving and planning utilization of seats be incorporated. Registered riders must reserve rides no later than 12:00 P.M., the day before they intend to use the Van. However, 24-hour notice of needing the Van is not always sufficient. Doctor's appointments should be made at least one week in advance to help assure you a seat on the Van. ***WHEN MAKING APPOINTMENTS IN FREMONT, LINCOLN, OR OMAHA, SCHEDULE THEM BETWEEN THE HOURS OF 10:30 A.M. AND 1:00 P.M.*** This will allow time to get you to your appointment and back home in the time available. The Van leaves the City by 3:00 P.M.

If you make reservations by mail, because you have no phone, we need to have your reservation information five days prior to the trip.

Contact the Saunders County Public Transportation Office at 402-443-8168 to schedule your ride. The following information will be needed:

1. Passenger Name
2. Address of Pickup Location
3. Destination Name & Address
4. Any Special Needs with Transportation (Wheelchair, Escort, etc.)
5. Time of Appointment or Desired Pickup Time

Any false appointments or statements to attain a seat on the Van will result in losing **all** Van privileges. This will not be tolerated due to crowded schedules.

Saunders County Public Transportation will make a confirmation call the day before your scheduled ride to confirm the pickup time. Saunders County Public Transportation reserves the right to cancel a scheduled pickup if conformation cannot be made prior to the scheduled pickup time.

DOOR-TO-DOOR SERVICE

Saunders County Public Transportation provides "door-to-door" service only. The following policies further define this service:

1. Private Homes:

- Passengers must enter and depart the transit vehicle at the designated pick-up and drop-off points. (Ex. Pickup at house; drop off at clinic).
- Drivers will not enter private homes for any reason.
- Drivers may assist passengers to and from the vehicle only.
- Drivers are not permitted to lift passengers.

Date:

Date(s) Revised:

Governing Body Approval Date:

- Drivers are not permitted to maneuver a mobility device up or down stairs.

2. Business/Medical Facilities/Public Buildings:

- Drivers may assist passengers into and from the inside door. Due to extreme temperatures in entryways, drivers may assist passengers through the second entry door when necessary. Drivers will not assist passengers further into the building.
- When picking up passengers from a business or medical facility, drivers may go through the first door. Drivers will not go past this point.
- It is the individual's personal care attendants' responsibility to ensure that passengers are waiting inside the door for their ride.
- Drivers will not enter nursing homes, medical facilities, shopping centers or businesses to locate passengers. Passengers must be waiting at the designated pickup point at least 15 minutes before their scheduled pick-up time or the no-show policy will apply.

CANCELLATION POLICY AND NO SHOWS

Passengers are encouraged to cancel scheduled pick-ups in a timely manner. Cancellations can be made by contacting the transit office at **402-443-8168** between 8:00 am and 4:30 pm, Monday thru Friday.

Cancellations should be made 24 hours in advance or as early as possible. Cancellations will be accepted up to one hour prior to scheduled pick-up times without penalty. Any cancellation received later than two hours prior to the scheduled pick-up will be considered a late cancellation and will be noted as such in the passenger's record. Three or more late cancellations in a 90-day period will be considered excessive and the violation of policy process will begin (see page 9).

A no show is defined as any instance in which a passenger does not keep their scheduled ride and fails to notify the Saunders County Public Transportation at least two hours prior to scheduled pick-up time. Upon arrival at the scheduled pick-up point, the transit driver will wait for the passenger for five minutes. After five minutes, the driver will continue on his/her route and the ride will be marked as a no show. The violation of policy process will begin with the first no show incident.

PASSENGER READINESS

Passengers should be prepared for transportation vehicles to arrive 15 minutes before or after your scheduled pick-up time. Schedule rides accordingly to arrive at your destination for appointments.

TRANSPORTING SERVICE ANIMALS & ACCOMODATION OF OTHER ANIMALS

Saunders County Public Transportation allows service animals to accompany owners as per the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990. ADA's revised regulations define a "service animal" as a dog that is individually trained to do work or perform tasks for an individual with a disability. Where reasonable, miniature horses are also allowed as service animals.

The task(s) performed by the service animal must be directly related to the person's disability. Under the ADA, "comfort," "therapy" or "emotional support animals" do not meet the definition of a service animal.

For more information about the rules and regulations regarding service animals, go to ADA's website at http://www.ada.gov/service_animals_2010.htm.

Animals other than service animals as described above are allowed to ride the transit vehicle only in a secured pet travel carrier.

PERSONAL ASSISTANTS (ESCORTS)/GUESTS

Personal care attendants are persons who are directly involved in the mobility assistance of the attendee and will be allowed to ride free of charge while accompanying their attendee. Generally, the following conditions would warrant a fare free attendant: Immobility, disorientation, non-comprehension, and communication impairment. Any other person riding with a passenger will be considered a guest and will be required to pay full fare.

Personal care attendants are required to specifically assist the passenger. This assistance includes, but is not limited to, the following duties:

- Assisting the passenger from his/her door to the bus and back
- Opening doors
- Pushing wheelchairs to and from the vehicle
- Transfer assistance from mobility device to a seat
- Carrying packages
- Communicating with the driver (if passenger is unable)

Saunders County Public Transportation reserves the right to determine if a rider requires an escort.

PASSENGER SAFETY AND SECURITY

It is required that all passengers wear an approved safety device while riding on the bus. Passengers utilizing mobility devices will be required to have their mobility device properly secured. A passenger who cannot enter the vehicle using the stairs or ramp, but who does not use a wheelchair, will be allowed to enter the vehicle using the lift. Drivers have the discretion to assign seats and determine wheelchair placement when necessary for the efficiency and/or safety of the passengers.

The driver may recommend that a passenger transfer from his or her mobility device into a vehicle seat. In this instance, the passenger has the final decision as to whether a transfer is appropriate.

State laws apply toward all passengers, including children.

GENERAL PASSENGER RULES

The general rules listed below are not intended to be all-inclusive but are considered a guideline for proper passenger behavior. The driver of the Van should be treated with respect. The driver has a large responsibility and needs your cooperation and respect at all times.

1. Riders shall wait until the transit vehicle has come to a complete stop before attempting to board or disembark. All riders shall stay seated until the vehicle stops.
2. While waiting for the transit vehicle at the designated pick-up point, riders shall stay off the traveled roadway at all times. Riders shall not walk along the side, directly in front of, or behind the bus for any reason.
3. All passengers will remain seated while the vehicle is in motion and for the duration of their ride.
4. Riders shall be considerate of others at all times. Threats, hitting, tripping, shoving, kicking, spitting, foul language, horseplay, teasing or any other improper or disruptive behavior towards anyone or themselves will not be tolerated. Please respect those around you. The driver of the Van must maintain an appropriate level of noise on the Van. We ask that if you speak to other riders on the van, you keep your voices at an appropriate level so that all riders may enjoy the ride. The driver may use his/her discretion and ask you to comply if other passengers are being affected by your behavior.
5. All passengers are to be clothed and wearing some form of protective footwear.
6. No roller skates, roller blades, ice skates, etc., are to be worn in the bus.
7. Devices such as radios or I-Pods can be used with headphones.
8. Passengers using alcoholic beverages and/or illegal substances will not be permitted in the transit vehicle
9. Riders shall keep hand(s), head or any other body part inside the bus and within their seated area at all times.
10. Riders shall obey the driver willingly and report any problems to the bus driver promptly.
11. Riders shall assist in keeping the transit vehicle clean by using sanitary practices. Any offensive odors to others or any type of unsanitary practices are to be avoided. Out of respect for others, please practice good hygiene while on the Van. The driver of Saunders County Public Transportation has the authority to maintain standards of good personal hygiene.
12. Use of tobacco products is strictly prohibited.

Date:

Date(s) Revised:

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13. Lighting matches, lighters, or any other type of flammable material is not permitted on the vehicle.
14. Any items that the driver assumes may be explosive or any type of weapon is not permitted on the vehicle.

Saunders County Public Transportation and/or its driver do not assume responsibility for any personal property taken on the Van.

CHILD RIDER POLICY

Saunders County Public Transportation has established rules, roles and responsibilities in the transportation of children under the age of 16. Therefore, the following policies will be followed:

1. All children must follow the transit rules, regulations, and policies. Violations of these rules by either the child or parent may lead to service suspension.
2. No child under the age of four (4) is permitted to ride alone on Saunders County Public Transportation, unless there is prior consent from Saunders County Public Transportation.
3. All children under the age of six (6) must wear an approved safety restraint. Parent or guardians are responsible for providing an approved safety restraint.
4. Children under the age of sixteen (16) must be accompanied by an adult. Exceptions to this policy for children over the age of four (4) include:
 - a. Agency to agency transportation, such as from the Y.M.C.A. to a Public School.
 - b. Transportation where the parent or guardian provides supervision for the child at both the pick-up and destination of the child's trip.
5. Children under sixteen (16) will be transported only to the destination scheduled by the parent or guardian. Children are not allowed to change scheduled rides.
6. Due to safety considerations, children under sixteen (16) will be transported within the city limits of their trip origin, unless accompanied by an adult.
7. Parent or guardians must notify Saunders County Public Transportation at the time of trip scheduling the child's age.
8. If no adult is at the destination location to accept the child (under 16 years of age), the child will NOT be left at the drop off location. Drivers will be instructed to deliver the child to the nearest law enforcement agency, and parents will be notified.

PACKAGES AND PERSONAL ITEMS

Generally, riders must not expect to transport material, baggage, parcels, merchandise, or other items which are in excess of what a person normally could expect to carry onto the vehicle, nor should riders expect to transport material which might cause an inconvenience, discomfort, offense, or danger to the other riders as a whole, or might cause inefficiency to the operation of the service. Out of respect for other passengers on the Van, we ask you to use

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common sense in how much shopping you do. This means food, etc. We recommend, with a loaded Van, you buy no more than two large sacks of groceries. You can hold one and have one on the floor by your feet. Because of lack of space, absolutely no coolers or ice chests will be allowed on the Van. Specifically, the driver has the authority to reasonably interpret and enforce this policy to fit the situation, trip and schedule to the advantage of both rider and service.

An oxygen tank must be portable and secured in some fashion so it cannot fall or roll. Securement can be with a seat belt or tank holder on the wheelchair.

Drivers and/or Saunders County Public Transportation are not responsible for lost, stolen or damaged items.

SEVERE WEATHER POLICY

Passengers are responsible for snow removal so their driveways and sidewalks are accessible to transit vehicles.

If extreme weather conditions make travel unsafe, services will be discontinued until conditions are more favorable. Passengers with scheduled trips will be notified as soon as possible. In the event that transit service is closed due to a weather event, Saunders County Public Transportation will notify passengers by phone. Saunders County Public Transportation follows the Wahoo Public School weather closings. If Wahoo Public School is closed due to weather, Saunders County Public Transportation will not be in service.

Winter Riding Tips:

- Be aware of weather conditions which may affect transit services.
- Allow extra time to reach your destination.
- Be prepared for sudden stops while riding the bus.
- Wear appropriate winter clothing.

VIOLATIONS OF POLICY

Any violation of the policies, rules, and procedures outlined in this handbook will result in the following:

First Offense: A warning letter will be issued.

Second Offense: A second and final warning letter will be sent and rides will be discontinued indefinitely.

Violence of any type (verbal or physical aggression) will not be tolerated and will result in the immediate and permanent discontinuation of transportation services.

Saunders County Public Transportation reserves the right to terminate services, with cause, immediately.

Date:

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NOTICE OF NONDISCRIMINATION AND COMPLAINT PROCEDURE

The Saunders County Public Transportation complies with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and other federal equal opportunity laws. Saunders County Public Transportation serves a diverse population of individuals with varying ages, physical challenges, economic status, and ethnic backgrounds. Saunders County Public Transportation shall ensure that no person shall be excluded from the participation in, be denied the benefits of, or otherwise be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity undertaken by Saunders County Public Transportation solely based on his/her race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, disability, or any other characteristic protected by law.

For Title VI complaints of alleged discrimination and inquiries regarding the nondiscrimination policies of Saunders County Public Transportation, contact 800-331-7496 or 402-443-8168, or visit the Saunders County Public Transportation office at 426 N Broadway, Wahoo, NE 68066. Complaint forms are available at 426 N Broadway, Wahoo, NE 68066. Title VI notices of public rights are posted in the Saunders County Public Transportation office and in each Saunders County Public Transportation vehicle.

COMPLAINT/GRIEVANCE PROCEDURES

As a recipient of State and Federal funds administered by the Nebraska Department of Roads, Saunders County Public Transportation hereby attests that it will abide by the eligibility guidelines and service priorities as stipulated by all applicable laws, rules and regulations. The process for submitting a Title VI complaint is outlined in the Nondiscrimination section above. For all other complaints, contact Saunders County Public Transportation in person or by mail at 426 N Broadway, Wahoo, NE 68066 or by phone at (402)443-8168.