

Morrill County Public Transit Passenger Handbook

GOALS OF PASSENGER HANDBOOK

Morrill County Public Transit is a transportation provider for Morrill County residents. This service has a set of policies and procedures that passengers are required to follow. It is to the benefit of all passengers that the 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 an appeals complaint with Morrill County as outlined on Page 7.

NOTICE OF NONDISCRIMINATION AND COMPLAINT PROCEDURE

The Morrill County Public Transit 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. Morrill County Public Transit serves a diverse population of individuals with varying ages, physical challenges, economic status, and ethnic backgrounds. Morrill County Public Transit 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 Morrill County Public Transit solely based on his/her race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, disability, or any other characteristic protected by law.

Title VI complaints of alleged discrimination and inquiries regarding the nondiscrimination policies of the Morrill County Public Transit may be directed to the Director of the Transit Program. Complaint forms are available at the Transit Office, located in Bridgeport, Nebraska.

DESCRIPTION OF SERVICE

The Morrill County Public Transit provides the following public transportation services to residents of Morrill County.

SERVICE AREA

The Morrill County Public Transit provides public transportation services in the following areas:

Broadwater, Bridgeport and Bayard, Nebraska

DAYS AND HOURS OF SERVICE

Morrill County Public Transit hours of operation are Monday through Friday, 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

Public transportation services are not provided on the following holidays:

New Year's Day, Martin Luther King Jr. Day, President's Day, Arbor Day, Memorial Day, Independence Day, Labor Day, Columbus Day, Veteran's Day, Thanksgiving Day and day following Thanksgiving Day, and Christmas Day.

SERVICE SCHEDULE

Broadwater: 1 day per week to Bridgeport; 1 day per month to Scottsbluff.

Bridgeport: 1 day per week in town, 1 day per week to Scottsbluff.

Bayard: 1 ½ days per week in town, 1 day per month to Bridgeport, 1 day per month to Scottsbluff.

- Extra trips may be added as the need arises as long as these trips do not interfere with the regular schedule

FEE SCALE

See attached fee schedule. (Page 8).

SERVICE TYPES

Demand responsive, in respective communities and necessary out of town medical trips and necessary shopping.

SCHEDULING RIDES

Contact Transit Office to schedule your ride. The scheduler may require the following information:

1. Passenger Name
2. Date of Birth
3. Address
4. Phone Number
5. Destination Name & Address
6. Expected Arrival Time

CURB-TO-CURB SERVICE

Morrill County Public Transit provides "curb-to-curb" 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.

- 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.
- 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 Bridgeport (308) 262-1846 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 one hour prior to the scheduled pick-up will be considered a late cancellation and will be noted as such by the dispatcher in the passenger's record. Three or more late cancellations in a 90-day period will be considered excessive and the passenger will receive written notification of such via the U.S. Postal Service. Passengers having additional late cancellations during the next 90-day period will be assessed a \$5.00 late cancellation fee, payable at the next boarding call.

A no show is defined as any instance in which a passenger does not keep their scheduled ride and fails to notify the Morrill County Public Transit office at least 2 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.

PASSENGER READINESS

Passengers should be prepared for transit 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

Morrill County Public Transit 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.

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

PERSONAL ASSISTANTS/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, noncomprehension, 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)

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 child passengers. Car seats are NOT provided.

GENERAL PASSENGER RULES

The general rules listed below are not intended to be all-inclusive but are considered a guideline for proper passenger behavior.

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. No roller skates, roller blades, ice skates, etc., are to be worn in the bus.
3. All passengers are to be clothed and wearing some form of protective footwear.
4. 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.
5. All passengers will remain seated while the vehicle is in motion and for the duration of their ride.
6. 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.
7. Devices such as radios or I-Pods can only be used with headphones.
8. Passengers carrying or 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 or dispatcher 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.
12. Eating or drinking beverages in the vehicle is not permitted.
13. Use of tobacco products is strictly prohibited.
14. Lighting matches, lighters, or any other type of flammable material is not permitted on the vehicle.
15. Any items that the driver assumes may be explosive or any type of weapon is not permitted on the vehicle.

CHILD RIDER POLICY

Morrill County Public Transit 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 the Public Transit vehicle.

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. If the parent or guardian does not have an approved safety restraint device, Morrill County transit will make every effort to provide one. This provision will be made on a first come, first served basis.
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 the Morrill County Public Transit 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 local police station, and parents will be notified.

PACKAGES AND PERSONAL ITEMS

Passengers shall limit their carry-on packages to not more than the equivalent of five brown paper grocery sacks or ten plastic bags per person. An attendant may travel to assist with the loading/unloading of packages. Oversized packages will be refused for transport. No one package shall weigh more than 20 pounds.

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 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, it will be announced on several local radio stations..

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 letter will be issued which will result in rides being discontinued for one week.
- Third Offense: A third and final letter will be sent and rides will be discontinued indefinitely.

Morrill County Public Transit reserves the right to terminate services immediately.

COMPLAINT/GRIEVANCE PROCEDURES

As a recipient of State and Federal funds administered by the Nebraska Department of Roads, Morrill County Public Transit 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 of this handbook. For all other complaints, contact the following for additional information and a copy of the complaint form:

Morrill County Public Transit Director

Upon receipt of the complaint, the Morrill County Public Transit representative will request written detail of the complaint or take an oral statement from the complainant. The complaint should include all details regarding the situation including date, time, driver, problem, etc. All complaints or statements should be signed or, if by telephone, the actual complainant should be the individual calling. Complaints received by telephone will be investigated and resolved prior to ending the call. A written response will not be required if complainant is satisfied with the resolution. Upon completion of the investigation, a decision regarding the complaint will be rendered and a written response issued to the complainant no later than 10 days after receipt of the complaint. A copy of the complaint and action taken will be forwarded to the Nebraska Department of Roads, Transit Section, and a copy will be kept on file at the Morrill County Public Transit office.

Governing Board Approval Date: November 12, 2013