

TRANSIT PASSENGER REGULATIONS

It is the mission of the employees of the Fort Smith Transit Department to provide safe, efficient, affordable, prompt, friendly, professional and clean public transportation to improve the quality of life for the citizens of Fort Smith, Arkansas.

These regulations are provided to insure the department's mission is held to the highest standard. Your cooperation in abiding by these regulations is greatly appreciated. Passenger(s) requesting reasonable modification to the policies should make their request in writing to P.O. Box 1908, Fort Smith, AR 72902.

SECTION I.

Policies Governing Transit Scheduling

The following regulations are maintained to provide fair and equal access to all transit passengers.

1. All paratransit/demand response passenger trips must be scheduled through the transit office at 783-6464. There could be some lengthy hold times, however, please be patient. Callers will be assisted in the order they are received. All calls are subject to audio recording for clarity of conversation.
2. Paratransit/demand response trips are to be scheduled at least one day prior to the requested trip.
General Scheduling Non ADA: Available **Monday** through **Friday** from 8:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. (2:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m. scheduling for next day only). **Saturday** 9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.
Paratransit/ADA Scheduling: Available **Monday** through **Friday** from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. **Saturday** 9:00 am to 4:00 p.m. **Sunday and holiday** scheduling can be accomplished by leaving your trip request on voice mail **between the hours of 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.** Confirmation is available any time after 5:00 a.m. the following business morning.
3. **Schedule Blocking:** Schedule blocking is prohibited and is defined as scheduling multiple trips to hold or reserve optimum travel times with the intent to use only the most preferred time(s) and to cancel the remaining trips.
4. **Future Scheduling:** Passengers are required to make their trip reservations by 3:00 p.m. the previous day; however, transit dispatchers have the authority to allow future scheduling for up to five (5) days depending on a review of each client's history with regards to cancellations.
5. **Routine Trip Service:** If a customer schedules repetitive trips on a routine and regular basis, (i.e. going to school, work or medical appointments, traveling to and from the same destinations consistently) routine trip service may be requested. With routine trip service, you may call once to initiate a recurring ride. Fort Smith Transit will schedule the ride on a continuing basis until the request is terminated, or cancellations or no shows become excessive. Some limitations may apply to remain in compliance with federal regulations.

6. **Cancellations:** Cancellations must be made as soon as possible to allow other clients sufficient time to request a ride in your place. A cancellation will result in a no-show if the transit office is not notified within one hour of the scheduled pick up time. When cancelling, be sure to clarify the exact trips or time frame to be cancelled.
7. **Electronic Surveillance:** All transit buses are equipped with electronic surveillance devices including cameras and microphones and are used to view accidents, incidents, and complaints.

SECTION II.

Policies Governing Transit Ridership

The purpose of the following ridership regulations is to provide fair and equal access to all transit passengers. These policies are provided to minimize conflicts and enhance the safety and efficiency of the operations.

1. **Age requirement:** Children seven (7) years of age or younger must be accompanied by someone twelve (12) years of age or older.
2. **Baggage:** Each passenger boarding the bus is limited to what they can carry on in a single trip or at a maximum the equivalent of three (3) grocery bags. Other garments, equipment, instruments or parcels should and will be limited by the driver's discretion based on safety. All baggage or carry-ons should be safely stowed away beneath the passenger's seat or secured so as to limit its movement from the aisle and/or the driver's area. All baggage parcels must remain in the responsible parties' possession and should not be left unattended at any time. Baggage left on the bus will be placed off the bus by transit staff or law enforcement personnel.
3. **Boarding:** All fixed route and paratransit passengers must be prepared and ready to board when the bus arrives. Passengers should have the correct fare in hand and ready for deposit when boarding.
4. **Boarding paratransit/demand response:** Fort Smith Transit utilizes a thirty (30) minute window for sufficient time to coordinate disruptions in traffic flow. Paratransit/demand response passengers must be ready to board fifteen (15) minutes prior to the scheduled pick-up time and up to fifteen (15) minutes after the scheduled pick up time. Please call the transit office if a bus has not arrived fifteen (15) minutes after the scheduled pick-up time. Passengers are allotted a maximum of five (5) minutes to board. Passengers should have the correct fare in hand and ready for deposit when boarding.
5. **Eating/Beverage:** Eating is not allowed on transit buses. No alcoholic beverages are allowed on the bus. Beverages must be kept in a container with a lid to prevent spills.
6. **Mobility Device Securement:** Mobility devices to be occupied while in transport are required to be secured to the bus floor. Passengers in mobility devices are required to fasten their safety belts as referenced in Section II (10) herein.

7. **Demand Response/Paratransit Trips:**

A. Demand response/paratransit incentive for frequent riders (on time - every time) provides one free ride (round trip) per month. The incentive requires more than 35 completed trips per month with no service disruptions and absence of any no-show occurrences.

B. FST has established trip reservation, cancellation, and no-show procedures that help on-time performance and ride availability.

- **Reservations:** must be made by 3:00 p.m. one day prior to your trip or by 5:00 p.m. for passengers certified as ADA eligible (after 3:00 p.m. for next day service only). Reservations will be accepted no more than five (5) days in advance of a ride.
- **Cancellations:** must be made at least one hour in advance.
- **No-Show Policy:** encourages a client to follow-through with rides they have scheduled or to cancel a ride at least one hour in advance.

Excused no-shows beyond the riders control:

- The customer is observed by transit staff as being sick.
- A family emergency, verified by transit staff, such as an illness of a family member, death.
- A mobility aid fails and prevents the passenger from accessing the bus system.
- A passenger is late because of experiences associated with connecting transportation, i.e. airplane, etc.
- The passenger encounters adverse weather conditions.
- Acts of God
- Staffing error or other occurrences verified by the transit director or designated recipient.

Unexcused no-shows or cancellations when a trip is missed for the following reasons:

- Customer didn't want to travel today.
- Customer changed their mind about using appointment.
- Customer didn't know that he or she had a ride scheduled or was supposed to call to cancel.
- Customer got another ride.
- Customer told someone else he or she was not planning to travel or someone else booked the ride.
- Customer doesn't want to ride with a specific driver or passenger or on a specific vehicle.
- Customer failed to board within the established arrival time frame after the schedule pickup time.
- Customer failed to cancel their trip reservation within one hour of the scheduled trip.
- Other occurrences verified by the transit director or designated recipient.

When a passenger's no show infractions exceed 10% of their monthly trips plus 3 no-shows, excluding passengers with 10 or fewer trips per month, the following consequences will occur:

1 st Violation (Exceeding Maximum per Month) -	Verbal Warning
2 nd Violation (Exceeding Maximum per Month) -	Written Warning
3 rd Violation (Exceeding Maximum per Month) -	5 Day Suspension
4 th Violation (Exceeding Maximum per Month) -	10 Day Suspension
5 th Violation (Exceeding Maximum per Month) -	30 Day Suspension

Note: Violation history is measured through a 6 month floating period.

Suspensions will begin five (5) business days following the next regularly scheduled Transit Advisory Commission meeting so the client can be notified and have an opportunity to contest the no-show, violation and/or make other travel arrangements.

8. **Personal Care Attendant (PCA):** Passengers requiring a personal care attendant, as so noted on their individual ADA application for eligibility, must be accompanied by a personal care attendant while traveling on Fort Smith Transit vehicles. Fort Smith Transit personnel will provide reasonable assistance for passengers boarding and navigating the transit system. (See Reasonable Assistance in Section IV, Service Definitions)
9. **Priority Seating:** Seats located near the front of each bus marked priority should be reserved for passenger(s) experiencing walking limitations. Passengers are encouraged to avoid using these specific seats unless needed.
10. **Seat-belts:** Seat-belts are required to be worn by all passengers seated in buses equipped with such devices.
11. **Service Animals:** Service animals are permitted on the transit buses. Service animals are specially trained animals that exhibit good behavior. Animals determined to be seriously disruptive will be suspended from the system.
12. **Smoking:** Smoking on the buses is prohibited by city ordinance.
13. **Prohibited Items:** Bringing any item of a dangerous nature on board vehicles or inside any transit facility, including but not limited to: weapons (firearms, knives or swords); flammable liquids; dangerous, toxic or poisonous substances; vessels containing caustic materials, chemicals, acids or alkalis.

SECTION III

Policies Governing Transit Passenger Behavior

The purpose of the following passenger behavior regulations is to ensure all passengers are provided with safe and comfortable transportation. Failure to abide by these policies could result in temporary or permanent suspension of ridership. The department may elect to issue an individual merit waiver program as one method of deterring inappropriate behavior while monitoring changes in passenger demeanor.

1. **Behavior:** Verbally or physically abusive behavior with transit staff or passengers will not be allowed such as: profanity, outbursts, threatening gestures or threatening words and other disruptive behavior. This list is not intended to be all inclusive. Other behaviors offensive to transit staff or passengers can be considered verbally or physically abusive.
2. **Interference:** No person may assault, threaten, demand, intimidate, perform unlawful acts, or interfere with a passenger or transit staff while in the performance of his or her duties. Transit staff has the authority to request that the passengers maintain orderly conduct.
3. **Hygiene:** A passenger may not be allowed on a vehicle if his or her physical hygiene presents a direct threat to other passengers or transit staff. A passenger will be given notice and an opportunity to correct the hygiene problem if the trip request can be accomplished with the provision of auxiliary aids or by reasonable modification of policy. Passengers with mobility devices must maintain such devices in a state of cleanliness. Passengers requiring a catheter must maintain the catheter in an enclosed space free from public view.
4. **Concerns:** Passenger complaints should be directed to the transit office
5. **Distractions:** Passengers must avoid or minimize actions that promote distractions to the driver while transit vehicles are operating in revenue service. Such acts as the usage of a cell phone near the location of a driver is prohibited; however, when otherwise used, ringers and voice noise levels must be kept to a minimum. Radios, pagers, electronic games and/or other devices must also be maintained at minimum noise levels. Passengers must remain seated in their traveling position or station until the bus comes to a complete stop and the driver acknowledges further instructions. Sudden moves that alert the driver may result in discontinued service. Passengers are asked not to socialize with the driver while the vehicle is in service. Our drivers are friendly, but please keep in mind that their attention must be on safe driving.
5. **Appropriate Dress:** Passengers may not be allowed on a vehicle if their dress attire may be considered offensive to others, as determined by transit staff. A passenger may be denied transportation for lack of clothing or improperly fit clothing that is excessively tight/small, loose/large, torn or gaping causing inappropriate body parts to become exposed.

The transit director is authorized by the Transit Advisory Commission to impose an immediate suspension to mitigate issues involving misconduct, seriously disruptive behavior or illegal acts.

**Actual or threatened physical abuse is a one-time offense.
There will be no second chances.**

SECTION IV.

Service Definitions

Fixed Route: A system in which transit vehicles follow along one (1) of six (6) predetermined routes. Fixed routes differ from other modes of transportation such as taxi cabs or demand responsive transportation, in which each trip may differ in its origin and destination.

Limousine: (Not performed by this agency) Demand responsive public transportation service on an exclusive basis, provided in a vehicle licensed to render that service for hire at rates of fare agreed upon by the operating licensee, its agent, or the chauffeur and the passengers.

Merit/Waiver: Authorization by administration to allow a passenger to continue riding privileges under advised conditions where the department would otherwise have the right to refuse service.

Mobility Device: Any device used to aid in the movement of a person with disabilities such as a wheelchair, walker, scooter, cane, crutches.

Origin to Destination: (Provided by this agency) Providing service from a passenger's origin to the passenger's destination.

Paratransit/Demand Response: Paratransit and demand response are essentially the same service provided by the same bus. Paratransit is defined by the Americans with Disabilities Act which is a requirement by the government to provide equal transportation benefits to individuals with physical or mental disabilities that have limitations which prevent their ability to safely access the fixed routes. This is a system in which origin-to-destination service is provided to patrons who request service by telephone, either for a specific purpose or subscription basis.

Paratransit Plan: A plan required by the Federal Transit Administration, developed by the controlling agency/authority with the assistance of the public, necessary to outline the transportation operations with regards to the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act as of 1991, as amended.

Reasonable Assistance: (Provided by this agency) Assisting passengers with positioning of mobility devices, securing seat belt restraint devices, providing minimal navigational instructions and assisting the blind to or from the paratransit/demand response bus. Examples of services beyond reasonable assistance (not performed by this agency) include door through door service, monitoring passenger care enroute, navigational assistance beyond minor instructions, assisting with personal items such as groceries, baggage, etc.

Same-Day-Service: (Not performed by this agency) Same-day-service permits a passenger to schedule travel arrangements on the same day as the intended transportation.

Service Animals: Service animals are permitted on the transit buses. Service animals are specially trained animals that assist passengers with specific disabilities. Animals determined to be seriously disruptive will be suspended from the system.

Taxi Cab: (Not performed by this agency) Demand responsive public transportation service on an exclusive basis, in a vehicle licensed to render that service.

Fort Smith Transit Appeal Process

The Fort Smith Transit Department has established an appeals process to provide individuals with grievances an opportunity to have their issues reviewed by a third party.

All grievances must first be filed in writing to the transit director within ten (10) business days of the alleged infraction. This will enable the director to ensure all information relating to the issue(s) have been apparent in the initial decision. If the issue can then be resolved to the satisfaction of the appellant, no further action will be necessary. If a resolution cannot be reached with the director within ten (10) business days, an appeal may be addressed by the Transit Advisory Commission and reviewed on a date determined by the chairperson. If grievances cannot be resolved after the above processes have been exhausted, the issue(s) may be addressed by the city administrator.

Grievances may be addressed to the Fort Smith Transit Department, P.O. Box 1908 Fort Smith, AR 72902 or by email to transit@fortsmithar.gov .