

FILLMORE COUNTY RURALTRANSIT

PASSENGER HANDBOOK



Fillmore County Rural Transit
Fillmore County East
1320 G. Street
Geneva, NE 68361
Phone-402-759-3345

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INTENT OF PASSENGER HANDBOOK

Fillmore County Rural Transit is pleased to serve the county with public transit service. This service has a set of policies that passengers must follow.

This booklet provides the policies pertaining to passenger safety and responsibilities for using our service.

It is for the benefit of all passengers that policies regarding passenger safety and responsibilities are followed. The policies in this booklet are critical to the efficiency and effectiveness of our system.

All passengers' policies will be enforced in a consistent, fair manner. If you feel you have been dealt with unfairly, an appeals process and telephone comment numbers are included in this booklet on page 10.

GENERAL INFORMATION

Fillmore County Rural Transit prides itself on providing safe and reliable transit services to the resident of Fillmore County. This service is made available through Federal, State and Local County Funds. It serves all communities within Fillmore County any day of the week, except County-observed holidays and weekends. Fillmore County Rural Transit is a demand response, door-to-door transit service for the public. Transportation service is available for Geneva residents Monday thru Friday 8:00 to 4:00 p.m.

Tuesdays thru Fridays the communities and rural areas of Fairmont, Grafton, Exeter, Milligan, Shickley, Strang and Ohioa are provided transportation to Geneva. Mondays are by appointment only.

HOLIDAY CLOSINGS

No public transportation service will be provided on the following County-observed holidays:

- New Year's Day
- Memorial Day
- Independence Day
- Labor Day
- Thanksgiving and the day after
- Christmas Day
- Veteran's Day
- Martin Luther King Day
- President's Day
- Arbor Day
- Columbus Day

SCHEDULING RIDES

Request Service:

All rides should be scheduled with the Transit Office at least **24 hours** prior to service. Rides may be requested by calling Fillmore County Transit at 402-759-3345. Office hours are 8:00 a.m. to noon and 1:00 to 3:00 p.m., Monday through Friday. When calling, please provide your name, destination and desired pick-up time. If you have more than one destination, please make staff aware of that. Please make sure that you inform the staff if you need special accommodations, such as a wheelchair or if you use a walker or a cane.

If you live outside of Geneva, plan your trip the day of the week that the van is scheduled to come to your community. A telephone answering machine is available on Saturdays and Sundays and after hours to schedule service for the next day. All appointments should be set so that they are not before the designated start time of the local transit system.

We understand there are extreme cases when these guidelines may not be followed; however, due to the nature of our services, rides requested with a shorter notice will be scheduled on a first-come-first-serve basis. If you do not request transportation 24 hours in advance, we cannot guarantee that you will be able to get a ride.

Regularly Scheduled Rides:

Riders who require regular transportation service (work, therapy, school, etc.) may schedule up to 30 days in advance.

Canceling Rides:

To cancel a ride, passengers must call the Transit office at least **one hour** before scheduled pick-up time. If you do not call one hour in advance, the trip will be regarded as a "no show." YOU will be responsible for paying for this ride next time he/she rides.

Cost of Service:

| <u>DESTINATION</u> | <u>ONE-WAY TRIP</u> |
|---------------------------------|---------------------|
| Within City Limits | \$1.00 |
| Town to Town or Rural to Town | \$2.00 |
| York | \$3.00 |
| Lincoln, Hastings, Grand Island | \$5.00 |

Scheduling Trips:

Fillmore County Transit makes every effort to arrive as closely to the scheduled pick-up time as possible. Due to the nature of the service, arrival times may vary. A 15-minute window has been established to accommodate for this variance.

- All passengers should anticipate an early arrival of up to 45 minutes or the possibility of a 45-minute delay.

Example: If you schedule a 9:30 a.m. pick-up, the bus may arrive as early as 8:45 a.m., so you should be prepared to leave at 8:45 a.m. The bus may be delayed, so be prepared to wait until 10:15 a.m. for the bus arrival.

- ❑ **All drivers will wait five (5) minutes past the scheduled pick-up time before leaving without the passenger.**
- ❑ In the event the appointment is completed prior to the scheduled return time, passengers are encouraged to notify the Transit office that they are available for pick-up. Every effort will be made to pick up the passenger as soon as possible, but if the demand for service does not allow, passengers will be picked up at their scheduled return time.

DOOR-TO-DOOR SERVICE

Fillmore County Transit provides “door-to-door” service. The following policies explain the meaning and intent of door-to-door.

1. Private Homes:

Transit drivers will not enter private homes for any reason. Drivers may assist passengers to and from the vehicle only and to their front door.

2. Business/Medical facilities/Public Buildings:

- ❑ Transit drivers may assist passengers into and from the inside door. Transit drivers **will not** assist passengers from office to another office.
- ❑ When picking up passengers from a business/medical facility, drivers may go through the first door. Drivers will not go looking for passengers.
- ❑ It is the individual’s, personal care attendants, or care provider’s 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 in an attempt to find passengers. Passengers must be waiting at the designated pick-up point at least 15 minutes before their pick-up time or the no-show policy will apply.

NO SHOW POLICY

Any passenger who is not at their designated pick-up point within **five (5) minutes** after their scheduled ride time will be considered a “no show” and the driver will continue with the next scheduled pick-up. Rides not canceled prior to the appointed pick up time are also considered “no shows”. **You will be responsible for paying for this ride next time you ride.**

If you anticipate being late for your scheduled pick-up, please call the transit office.

Fillmore County Transit wishes to provide timely service to our passengers. “No shows” pose a unique problem for our service. It is vital that each passenger be responsible for notify transit if they do not need a scheduled ride. Abuse of the system, such as scheduling rides repeatedly and not taking them, will be dealt with on a case-by-case basis and could result in termination of service.

PAYMENT

Cash Fares:

Payment is required at time of service. If paying cash, correct change is required. Drivers will not have change.

Transit Tickets:

Passengers can purchase transit tickets, which can be used towards rides. Tickets may be kept by the passenger or at the transit office and will be punched for each ride the passenger takes. You will be notified when you are in need of a new ticket.

Charge Accounts:

Charge accounts will be provided to only those individuals whose rides are charged to an agency or facility. Individuals will not be allowed to charge rides.

SEAT BELT POLICY

It is required that all Fillmore Country Transit passengers wear an approved safety device while riding in Transit vehicles.

State laws apply toward child passengers. Car seats and booster seats are available by request.

ESCORTS/GUESTS

Personal care attendants are persons who are directly involved in the mobility assistance of their attendee and will be allowed to ride free of charge.

Any other person riding with a passenger will be considered a guest and will be required to pay for their ride.

CHILD PASSENGER POLICY

1. All children must follow all Fillmore County Transit rules, regulations, and policies. Violations of these rules by either the child or parent may lead to service suspension.
2. All children up to 8 years of age must be correctly secured in a federally approved Restraint System. Fillmore County Transit does have car seats and booster seats available for use.

3. An adult must accompany children under the age of three.
4. 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.
5. Parent or guardians must complete a Rider registration form in order for their child to receive transportation.
6. Children under the age of 18 cannot call schedule their own ride, a parent or guardian must contact the Transit office to schedule a ride.

There is no charge for children under the age of 3 in the company of an adult.

ADVERSE WEATHER

Weather Related Access to Private Homes

Passengers are responsible for snow removal to make their homes accessible to Fillmore County Transit. Van drivers are **not required** to assist passengers through snow or ice should it pose a risk to them.

Discontinuing Service Due to Weather Conditions

Fillmore County Transit will make every effort to provide service whenever scheduled. In the event extreme weather conditions exist which make travel unsafe, Fillmore County Transit reserves the right to discontinue services until conditions are more favorable. We do not consider routine appointments (medical, hair, etc.) necessary during severe weather. If service is temporarily discontinued, all rides, regardless of trip purpose, will be cancelled.

Winter Riding Tips:

- Keep current on weather conditions, which may affect Transit services.
- If streets are icy, allow additional travel time.
- Avoid delays by being on time and having correct fare ready.
- Clean footwear of snow and slush before boarding so it does not gather on the steps and floor of the transit vehicle, causing danger to others.
- Wait until the transit vehicle comes to a complete stop before leaving your seat and before boarding.
- Be prepared for sudden stops while riding the vehicle.
- At all times, watch your step, wear your seatbelt, and wear appropriate winter clothing and shoes.

Severe Weather Passenger Guide

Severe snow and rainstorms can affect Fillmore County Transit service. The following may occur any time hazardous road conditions exist:

- Travel time may increase.
- Some routes may be shortened or cancelled.

- ❑ Transportation on less traveled streets, especially those not plowed or sanded, may be cancelled.
- ❑ Absolutely NO alley travel allowed.
- ❑ In case of severe weather, all passengers will be taken home immediately.

Passengers and/or care providers are responsible for ensuring that passengers are properly dressed for their ride. Bus operators will not assist passengers with their clothing. This includes proper coats, hats, gloves, and footwear.

SPECIAL SERVICES OFFERED

Fillmore County Transit has one vehicle equipped with a wheelchair lift. If you are in need of the lift, please notify the transit office when you schedule your ride. If the rider is unable to complete travel by his or herself, an attendant/escort will be **required** to assist the rider. The attendant/escort fare will be waived.

All electric wheelchairs and scooters are required to be secured while the transit vehicles are in motion.

REFUSING SERVICE

Occasionally, transit staff and passengers are faced with situation in which one rider is disruptive or has posed safety or other threats imposing a negative impact on all those around them. These actions can cause other passengers to feel unsafe or stop using the transit service because of these issues.

Fillmore County Transit reserves the right to refuse service to any passenger who displays the following behaviors:

- ❑ Intoxicated
- ❑ Disruptive
- ❑ Belligerent/rude- Individuals using abusive language that affects or is offensive to other riders.
- ❑ Poses a safety or health threat to themselves or others
- ❑ Individuals who are argumentative, abusive or make threats either verbally or by physical gesture to transit staff or other riders.
- ❑ Individuals who consistently refuse to follow Fillmore County Transit rules and procedures.

Fillmore County Transit has zero tolerance towards violence. Any overt act of violence or threat of violence will result in termination of passenger rides.

Fillmore County Transit personnel are required to complete an incident report and document such actions or problems and report them to the Transit Manager.

If a passenger displays any of the following behaviors, the following steps may be taken:

1. First offense – A written warning will be forwarded to the individual, explaining the problem and possible denial of service if the problem continues.
2. Second offense – A second letter will be sent and rides will be discontinued for one week.
3. Third offense – A third and **final** letter will be sent and rides will be discontinued indefinitely.

Fillmore County Transit reserves the right to terminate services immediately.

Anyone dissatisfied with the decision to deny or restrict services may avail themselves of the grievance procedures established by Blue Valley Community Action.

GRIEVANCE PROCEDURES

Fillmore County will not discriminate in the provision of services to an applicant because of their race, color, national origin, sex, age, religion, political affiliation, marital status, family status, disability status, or any other status protected by federal and state laws. All Service animals are welcomed; a written certification must be received from a medical/mental health professional.

It is our intent to provide courteous and professional services to all who meet the eligibility guidelines for the individual programs we administer.

If a passenger has a complaint about an incident or denial of services, they should immediately notify the Transit Manager.

If the passenger is not satisfied with the response or if the problem involves the Transit Manager, the passenger may send a written statement of the complaint to:

Blue Valley Community Action
Ryan Bailey, Family and Community Services (FCS) Director
620 5th Street PO Box 273
Fairbury, NE 68352
402.729.2278 ext. 106
rbailey@bvca.net

The FCS Director will investigate each complaint and recommend a resolution in accordance with the program guidelines to the Chief Executive Officer. The Chief Executive Officer, upon review of the recommendation, will determine the appropriate resolution of the grievance. This determination will be subject to review by the Community Action Board of Directors.

Fillmore County Transit reserves the right to refuse service to any passenger who displays the following behaviors:

- ❑ Intoxicated
- ❑ Disruptive
- ❑ Belligerent/rude

- Poses a safety or health threat to themselves or others

Fillmore County Transit has zero tolerance towards violence. Any overt act of violence or threat of violence will result in termination of passenger rides.

Fillmore County requires the following passenger behaviors when riding in a Transit vehicle:

1. Remaining seated while the bus is in motion.
2. Keeping seat safety device on at all times while the bus is in motion.
3. Keeping hands and personal objects to oneself.
4. No foul language to any other rider.
5. No screaming or yelling on the bus.

For passengers who refuse to abide by these requirements, Fillmore County Transit reserves the right to refuse service.

REASONABLE MODIFICATION PROCESS

Fillmore County Transit is committed to comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Fillmore County Transit will make reasonable modifications/accommodations to ensure that Transit is accessible to individuals with disabilities.

If a person wishes to file a reasonable modification complaint, the following process shall be followed:

1. To file a reasonable modification request, request a complaint form, complete it in full and submit it and send to the person and address on the form.
2. All reasonable modification requests must be submitted in writing. If the complainant is unable to write because of a disability and needs assistance in completing the form, BVCA staff will assist by taking the reasonable modification request by phone. Please call Roxanne Hammond at 402-729-2278 for assistance at the Blue Valley Community Action Partnership (BVCA) administrative office.
3. BVCA will begin an investigation within fifteen (15) working days of receipt of a written reasonable modification request.
4. BVCA will contact the complainant in writing no later than thirty (30) working days after receipt of a reasonable modification request. If the complainant fails to provide the requested information in a timely basis, BVCA shall administratively close the reasonable modification request.

5. BVCA shall complete the investigation within ninety (90) days or receipt of the reasonable modification request. If additional time for investigation is needed, the complainant will be contact.
6. A written response will be prepared by BVCA which will include a summary of why the request was denied or grants and recommended action. The complainant will have fifteen (15) working days from receipt of the response to appeal a denial. If no appeal is received, the reasonable modification request will be closed and no further action will be taken.

REASONABLE MODIFICATION COMPLAINT APPEALS PROCESS

A complainant who is not satisfied with BVCA's response to a complaint regarding a request for reasonable modification has the right to appeal.

BVCA and governing body of the agency will review your appeal and respond within twenty-one (21) working days from the date of the appeals request.

The decision to allow or deny a request for reasonable modification will be based on information from the complainant and ADA regulations and exceptions to the rule.

These exceptions are:

1. When the modification/accommodation would cause a direct threat to the health or safety of others;
2. Would result in a fundamental alteration of the service;
3. Would not actually be necessary in order for the individual with a disability to access the transportation entity's service; or
4. Would result in an undue financial and administrative burden.